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A COMMENTARY

ON

ECCLESIASTES

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A COMMENTARY

ON

ECCLESIASTES

BY THE REV.

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O.T. Ecclesiastes. Criticism, interpretation, e
O.T. Ecclesiastes. Commentaries

דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים וְחִידֹתָם׃ יִרְאַת יְהוָה רֵאשִׁית דָּעַת

RIVINGTONS
London, Oxford, and Cambridge:
1873

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PREFACE.

THE following Commentary differs from many of its predecessors in the greater weight given to the interpretation of the LXX., and the closer investigation of their peculiar renderings. In many cases these strange renderings on the part of the LXX. are dismissed by commentators as simply errors. But this is not consistent with what true criticism ought to do. The LXX. is not only the oldest translation we have, but also the only one made when Hebrew was yet a living language. Its peculiar renderings then deserve our most serious attention. The investigation of them will fully reward the inquirer. This, then, is the cause of the special line of interpretation adopted in this Commentary.

With regard to the Book of Ecclesiastes itself, the writer must confess himself *homo unius libri;* for some years past all his Hebrew and Greek studies have been devoted to the investigation of the meaning of this one book in the Sacred Canon, and all his conclusions must be taken with the reservation that they apply, directly, to this one book alone. Such a concentration of effort may be expected to produce results which might not be arrived at by a far wider and more extensive research, just as a few rays of sunlight concentrated by a small lens will burn where the sun himself will only warm.

Nevertheless, this book does not profess to be anything in the nature of a new discovery. Sense is attempted to be made of difficult passages by what may be called a microscopic attention to the grammar of the writer, and a minute and careful analysis of every form and expression he uses. The test of the correctness of the meaning thus found is displayed in the way in which it falls into place in the

context, and squares with its tenor. But nothing novel in the way of Hebrew grammar is urged, or anything which may not be found in ordinary commentaries, except, perhaps, it be the fact of the difference of signification between the contracted and full relative pronoun —a usage which is peculiar to the Book of Ecclesiastes. This has hitherto been dismissed by other commentators as evidence of late composition, without giving it the notice it merited.

Many points of interest are started in these pages, which would well repay a more careful investigation than I have either leisure or learning to follow out. They are only presented so far as necessary to illustrate and clear up difficulties in the interpretation of that marvellous book which is the subject of this Commentary. If I have succeeded, the Church will be benefited; if I have altogether failed, my book will only add a few pages more to the vast literature which this, the scientific treatise of the Divine Word, has elicited.

London, *Oct.* 1873.

INTRODUCTION.

DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

THE title or superscription of the book is, chap. i. 1, 'The words of Koheleth, the son of David, king of Jerusalem,' and this is further explained in verse 12, by 'I Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem.' The only person in Jewish history who answers exactly to this description is Solomon, and accordingly the whole ancient Church, Jewish as well as Christian, have regarded Solomon as the undoubted author of the book. With this conclusion even modern criticism is so far agreed, that it is universally admitted that Solomon is the hero or personated author, even though it is denied that he was the real writer. It is alleged that internal evidence is against the supposition of so early a date; for that the language and tone of thought in the book point to a writer further on in Jewish history. The favourite opinion amongst German scholars is, that Ecclesiastes was composed towards the end of the Persian dominion. Ewald, indeed, considers that, so far as language and style is concerned, the book might be the very latest written in the whole Hebrew Scriptures.

A detailed history of the exposition of the book will be found in the *Coheleth* of Dr. Ginsburg, together with a complete discussion of the reasons for and against Solomonic authorship. It will be unnecessary, therefore, to go into detail on this point. We shall only add what concerns the immediate object of the present Commentary, remarking that several most competent English-speaking scholars remain unconvinced by arguments which have apparently fully satisfied their German brethren. Dr. Wordsworth, Professor Plumptre, Dr. Taylor Lewis of America, argue that the book is really Solomon's, while even in Germany D. H. A. Hahn (*Com. über das Predigerbuch*, Leipzig, 1860) is strongly on the side of the Solomonic authorship.

The principal arguments in favour of later date derived from internal evidence, arise from (*first*) the state of violence and misery

depicted in the book with so much bitterness, and which, it is alleged, cannot be made to harmonize with what we know of the reign of Solomon; and (*secondly*) the strongly Aramaic character of the language, which assimilates itself to that of the books of Daniel and Esther. With regard to the first point (if we have at all found the real interpretation of the book), it seems improbable that any special description of a particular period could have been ever intended, or even any allusion to the special circumstances of any people. So far also from supposing a time of trouble in the mind of the writer, on the contrary the point and moral of the book will be enhanced if we suppose it to be written rather in a time of prosperity than of adversity or oppression. Thus, if we turn to the expressions of chap. iv. 1 we shall see that to give any special reference to them, and suppose them peculiar or out of the way, would weaken the force of Koheleth's argument. Human life generally, under the very best of external circumstances, always exhibits the spectacle both of oppressions by the wicked, and of oppressed without comforters. Now underneath this statement lies the difficulty that He who permits this is the merciful Author of Nature Himself, and it is this difficulty which is especially discussed. There is no necessity to suppose the concluding years of Persian tyranny to be pointedly alluded to, because it is not under an Asiatic despotism alone that hypocrites come and go from the place of the holy (chap. viii. 10), or servants are seen on horseback, and nobles, like serfs, walking afoot (chap. x. 7), or that men continue in prosperous wickedness (chap. ix. 3). Indeed, the same may be said of any other of the similar providential difficulties advanced in this book, for the very same occurrences may be witnessed now in this age of civilisation and progress. The reply then to the assertion that it is 'impossible to reconcile this state of things with the age of Solomon' is simply this. There is no need even to make the attempt, because there is no reason to believe that, considering the author's standpoint, he intended that the instances of human suffering and disappointment he cites should be taken otherwise than perfectly generally. What he adduces of this nature is in sufficient measure true always, at the best of times. It would blunt the point of his reasoning if it could be shown that the difficulties he starts were exceptional or temporary; but this is not so. Koheleth's repeated declaration is that *all*—that is, the whole of human life—is vanity or evanescence.

The argument from Aramaic words is much more formidable, and would be conclusive if our knowledge of the successive stages of the Hebrew language were less fragmentary and uncertain than is really the case. It is quite true that such words as מדינה, רעיון, רעות, כבר, פתגם, זמן, have an Aramaic colouring; but we must set against this the fact that, as Ewald remarks, we have in Ecclesiastes a new philosophical terminology, which has modified the Hebrew of the book. And again, it will be seen by referring to the places where these peculiar words occur, that they are introduced either for the purposes of expressing new ideas or terms not found in the language elsewhere. Sometimes the more usual word would be out of harmony with the context, *e.g.* the word זמן replaces the more ordinary מועד, because not only is the latter used to signify a *feast*, but the root-meaning of the former is just what is required by the argument. Again, כבר, as will be seen stated at length in the notes, is used in the purely technical sense, of 'this present,' and not in the ordinary meaning of 'already.' The unusual אלא, chap. vi. 6, also is apparently introduced for the sake of the alliteration with הלא in the next clause, and the once occurring עֵדֶן chap. iv. 3, for the sake of the equivoke to which its use gives rise. All these Aramaic words are noticed as they occur in the body of the Commentary, and we think that the conclusion which results from what there appears is to weaken very considerably any argument as to date which can be drawn from them one way or the other.

Again, the object of the book is so peculiar, and so different from all the rest of Scripture, and especially from those which, supposing Solomon was the author, would stand related to it in point of time, that we may well expect some difference of language and colouring. Again, also, there is another reason. The books immediately subsequent to Solomon's era are all prophetic. Now it seems natural that prophets should use an antique style, which would be tinged with that of the earlier religious books, while if, on the other hand, as the LXX. seem to imply by their translation of the word Koheleth, and appears also from the alliterations in the book itself, it were an address orally delivered, it would no doubt contain colloquialisms. There are strong indications that it does so. Now these colloquialisms would certainly have an Aramaic cast about them. Thus the difference of diction between the Hebrew of Koheleth and a contemporary prophet would be exaggerated, and any estimate of date due to this difference proportionately uncertain.

On the whole, for myself, I have no theory to support either way. I am content to let the matter rest, as I believe the Scripture itself leaves it, which, after all, nowhere refers the authorship to Solomon. In accordance with this, both to save space and to conduce to clearness, I have always referred to the author by the name Koheleth, and to the book itself as Ecclesiastes, in the course of the subsequent Commentary.

DESIGN AND METHOD OF THE WORK.

The design of the book is no other than argumentatively to work out the concluding aphorism of the whole: 'Fear God, and keep His commandments, for *this* is the whole problem of Humanity.' This truth is never for a moment lost sight of, not even in those passages which sound most sceptical or Epicurean. We may compare this marvellous book to an overture, and say that this truth is its subject. This overture, however, is written in a minor key; it is almost always plaintive; sometimes it descends to what sounds like absolute discord; but this subject floats through its wildest and strangest melodies, resolves its harshest discords, connects its most erratic wanderings. Koheleth is a perfect master of sarcasm. A certain grim and bitter yet grave and holy satire runs through his book. He makes his readers think whether they will or no. For this purpose he sometimes descends to plays upon words, equivokes, alliterations, possibly also proverbs in ordinary circulation. He certainly writes in the 'vulgar tongue.' But these equivokes always help the sense. If Koheleth appears in the guise of a popular preacher, he never loses sight of the moralist and philosopher. His sermon, for such we believe it to be, will bear comparison with another wonderful sermon found in Holy Scripture, with which it has some striking points of resemblance, and yet how wonderfully different!

The book then opens with an exclamation which serves as a text or topic—'Vanity of vanities,'—and forthwith proceeds to state the question, and work out the conclusion which this topic suggests. Has mankind any advantage (in the sense of a result in the future) by reason of his toil or anxiety (the technical word here used is עמל, by which word is meant the same thing as the Greek expresses by *μέριμνα*, cares of this life, Matt. xiii. 22)? This he answers in the negative by eight aphorisms, four drawn from observation of nature and four from moral considerations, which we have called the eight

*un*beatitudes of the sermon. This constitutes the first part of the proof. Koheleth then goes on to discuss the question, Can any solution of this providential difficulty be discovered? This, in the first place, is attempted to be answered by an autobiography, in which Koheleth shows in succession that wisdom, mirth, accumulation of wealth, etc., are alike evanescent and unsatisfactory, as his own experience (and no one was likely to do better) abundantly displayed. These together form the first great division of the book —Chaps. I. and II.

In the next five Chapters, III. to VII., the same question is discussed from another point of view. Koheleth remarks on the unalterable character of Providence, and shows that even if it were possible that human wisdom could cause change (which it cannot), that the alteration could only be for the worse. He begins by enumerating twenty-eight times or seasons—that is, a fourfold seven—of which the last is 'a time of peace.' This is especially worthy of remark, as it is an instance of one of those hopes of better things which Koheleth allows to appear, as it were by stealth, amidst his most melancholy utterances. He then argues this matter, and through a long and sustained course of reasoning, the conclusion of which is, that God must right the wronged.

But there naturally arises the objection, If this be so, why does impiety and oppression exist so continually in the very places or circumstances where we ought to expect the reverse? To this Koheleth offers two solutions, which, however, are neither satisfactory; the second indeed would lead to absolute scepticism. The true deduction is however stated in the last verse of chap. iii. (22), which is, that if any result is to be accomplished by human toil, it can only consist in present gratification.

Koheleth then turns to the consideration of oppressions or afflictions, this turn of thought being that present enjoyment is marred by the existence of so much irremediable unhappiness; that if this world be all, the dead are better off than the living; that the result even of success is envy rather than pleasure; that it is useless labouring for posterity, and no avail in the present. Koheleth here sarcastically points out that labour for others does give some advantage, the only instance where he sees the possibility of any at all. He carefully limits, however, all this to the present life, this formula 'under the sun,' *i.e.* in this world of labour and toil, being introduced frequently, showing that all he says is to be taken with this proviso.

In Chapter v. Koheleth begins to display the great remedy for human ills—that is, piety, patience, and submission to the Divine will, cautioning against foolish sacrifices, rash vows, rash speeches, selfishness and avarice. This display of the remedy, however, is as yet subordinate, the main object being to show that all arguments conspire to prove the vanity or transitoriness of human existence. With this Chap. vi. ends, and with it the more argumentative portion of the treatise.

Chap. vii. opens with a paradoxical statement of seven good things, which look like evil ones, and on this Koheleth develops the thought that man does not know a good thing when he sees it. He shows that even wisdom itself will not necessarily produce happiness in this world, though this, he is sure, is a good thing; but he is very bitter and sarcastic on those who, because right does not always succeed, resort to impiety; this, he shows, is a great and fatal mistake. Though the proposition that piety is happiness is not formally stated or worked out argumentatively, nevertheless this is proved so completely that Koheleth is able at the end of the whole to cite this as the real result of his argument.

If, however, piety be the remedy for human ills, early piety is essential to tolerable ease and quiet in this world. This is set forth in the same paradoxical and sarcastic way as before. We are advised to avoid certain evils while we can. These are described with great pathos in Chap. xii. It is however, we believe, quite a mistake to imagine that the close of the book contains an *allegorical* description of old age. The weakness and other trials of age are, no doubt, brought before us in very poetic and picturesque language. There is an Oriental richness and floridness about this language at first strange to Western ears; but the images employed all admit of resolution by an appeal to the usage of Scripture elsewhere, and can be shown to be quite in place. The conclusion of the whole is significantly the same as the topic at the beginning, 'Vanity of vanities, the whole is vanity.'

The Epilogue, chap. xii. 9, follows. This has been pronounced by some to be an interpolation, the work of a later hand; but we could no more imagine a book of the Old Testament ending with such an aphorism as vanity of vanities, without doing violence to our critical instinct, than we could believe that the Gospel of St. Mark was ever intended to end with the words 'They were afraid' [ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ, Mark xvi. 8]. It is rather the bold, open statement of the truth,

which has in a more or less covered manner formed the subject of the whole book. The aphorism, 'Fear God and keep His commandments,' contains the only possible solution of providential difficulties or remedy of human ills, and it is in vain to look for any other. The reasons for this mystery we must leave to God alone. He will bring into judgment—*i.e.* into adjustment or declared consistency with justice—every mystery, whether to our notions good or evil. With this assurance the book appropriately ends.

GRAMMATICAL PECULIARITIES.

The Book of Ecclesiastes being a didactic and argumentative treatise, and the only work of its kind in the Scriptures, its Hebrew is modified to meet the requirements of that which is a new philosophy, so that we may fully indorse Ewald's expression, that 'Koheleth uses the Hebrew language as a flexible instrument for the expression of novel ideas.' This naturally implies a usage of words and phrases peculiar to this book, and accounts for the large number of unusual forms and once occurring words and the like which here meet us. It will be apparent to any who will diligently examine the text, that Koheleth confines himself very strictly indeed to the rules of his own grammar, and uses articles, prepositions, and tenses with an accuracy not inferior to Greek itself. For example, there is a real distinction to be discovered between the usage of masculine and feminine forms, where a substantive is of both genders. It is not a matter of indifference whether the full relative is used or the contracted form; on the contrary, it will be seen that the contracted relative gives an optative or subjunctive sense; or whether a verb governs directly or through the intervention of the particle אֵת; a distinction which the LXX. were quite aware of, and which gave rise to their adverbial *σὺν*. What, for want of a better term, we have called distributive plurals—*i.e.* a singular noun and plural verb in agreement, or *vice versâ*—are exceedingly significant. They have a peculiar shade of meaning, according to circumstances and position in the sentence. It is too a matter of some consequence whether the nominative precedes or follows the verb; hence in the running translation this order is never reversed, even where our idiom requires it, but explanatory words are introduced. All these matters are, where necessary, pointed out in the notes—perhaps some may imagine pressed too far, and repeated *ad nauseam;* but the excuse must be that

on these minutiæ depend the evidence of correct rendering. If thus a good sense is made out, as it were spontaneously, and which, moreover, is found to fall into place as it occurs in the context, we have strong evidence that we have hit the real meaning.

Connected with this grammatical usage is a peculiar terminology, also to be expected in a scientific treatise. Thus דבר is very commonly rendered in this Commentary by 'reasoning,' the exact idea implied being a matter or thing reasoned about, with the further notion or conclusion that this reason will become ground of action. No single English or even Greek word will render it, but once let us master its real significance, and the force and cogency of many passages will become manifest. Again, חפץ, which has the sense of 'an agreeable occurrence,' 'a providence,' and then generally of 'any event,' in this book denotes a '*providential* occurrence.' Again, עמל is not exactly toil, but the fatigue, distress, or anxiety that comes of it. It differs from ענין, which is also anxiety, but that kind of anxiety which comes of uncertainty as to a future result. Two most important words are סכלות and הוללות: the former is that kind of folly which has the appearance of wisdom, clever folly, or foolish wisdom; the latter is that kind of folly which is begotten of a false expectation of the result, as in our expression 'made a fool of.' So again כבר is not an adverb 'already,' but rather a substantive,—this present considered as now existing. These technical words are all noticed as they occur, and a sense given, the proof of the correctness of which is that appropriate meaning is made in every place in which they occur. As several are found nowhere else in Scripture, this is the only true method of coming at their meaning. It is also worthy of notice that these words occur usually seven or ten times, or some other round or mystic number. This happens so frequently that it can hardly be accidental, but I have seldom been able to trace any rule or law in this circumstance. On the whole, however, it may be taken as an axiom that when Kohéleth uses a peculiar word, he intends to express a peculiar idea, and his meaning must be sought accordingly. Careful attention to this point clears up many difficulties.

Alliteration and paronomasia occur with great and characteristic frequency, a proof surely that the book was intended to be preached or delivered as an address. It is, of course, very difficult to give these in the English version. Sometimes in the paraphrastic translation this is attempted by means of rhymes and alliterations.

I can hardly pronounce these quite successful, and often have felt inclined to return to a more literal rendering, but then this most characteristic feature of the book would have been lost to the English reader. Every one who has ever addressed an assembly knows how very telling these hits are, and moreover they are of real importance to the commentator, as bringing the words on which the alliteration depends into artificial prominence. There is a danger, no doubt, that when once the mind is aroused to this, that equivokes should be found where they were not intended; but of this the reader must judge.

This perhaps is the best point at which to discuss the meaning of the word Koheleth. In its present form and pointing קֹהֶלֶת is the active feminine participle of Kal of the verb קהל, occurring as a verb only in niphal and hiphil. The fem. noun occurs Deut. xxxiii. 4, קְהִלַּת—*i.e.* this word differently pointed—which the LXX. render by *συναγωγῆς*. קְהִלָּה occurs Neh. v. 7, rendered *ἐκκλησίαν*. With this before us it seems beside the mark to seek a meaning out of the root קהל. According to the usage observable in this book, feminines (we should prefer to call them abstracts) in ת differ from those in ה—comp. עמדת, chap. i. 4; the abstract in this form again becomes as it were a concrete. Thus we should incline to indorse the view enunciated by Preston, who considers the word to be represented by 'collector' or 'concionator' in Latin. Both these meanings we believe are contained in the word, and it is quite consistent with what we know of the style of Ecclesiastes to admit that both these meanings were intended to be conveyed. The discourse is a collection of separate but connected aphorisms on the transitoriness of human existence—the author is thus a collector of them; and as the discourse was delivered apparently when collected, he is a concionator or preacher also. The word used by the LXX., *ἐκκλησιαστὴς*, occurs nowhere else, either in the Old or New Testaments, so that the *precise* meaning they affixed to the word is unknown. In classical Greek it means preacher.

The repetition of a word, whether substantive or particle, in the same sentence, of course gives emphasis to that word; to translate accurately, therefore, when this occurs, we have to add some English equivalent, such as 'this' or 'as well,' and so forth, see Com. *passim*. A careful attention to this rule will often considerably help to clear up obscure passages.

ON THE PECULIAR RENDERINGS OF THE VERSION OF THE LXX.

The remark of Delitzsch on the translation of the LXX., affixed to the Book of Psalms (Delitzsch on the Psalms, Clark's Library, Edin.) may be introduced here:—'This translation, as being the oldest key to the understanding of the language of the Old Testament writings, as being the oldest mirror of the Old Testament text, and as an important check upon the interpretation of Scripture handed down in the Talmud and Midrash, and in that portion of the national literature not originating in Egypt, is invaluable.' For this remark applies to the rendering of Ecclesiastes in an equal, if not greater degree, and may be offered as an excuse, if one be needed, for the comparatively large space assigned to the discussion of the Septuagint renderings.

A peculiarity which meets us in this book is the occurrence of the preposition σὺν followed by an accusative, and in one case a genitive, and which seldom if ever occurs in other books. This apparently trifling circumstance, which is usually treated as a barbarism, will give the clue which will lead to some curious and interesting facts connected with the methods of translation adopted by the LXX.

If we examine carefully and in detail the wording of the LXX. we can hardly fail to be struck with the excessive care that is taken to render in the exact order of the Hebrew—a remark which may be extended to other portions of this version, the Book of Job being, however, a striking exception, (and when there is any considerable departure, in almost every instance hitherto examined a serious variation of text in the different recensions of the LXX. will be found to occur.) In Ecclesiastes this order is so strict that, with hardly an exception, it would be possible to print the Greek text as it stands as an interlinear translation. This most interesting point deserves further investigation than appears as yet to have been given to it. My own impression from this circumstance, is that the version of the LXX. was made with the idea that those who used it had the Hebrew before them, and this hypothesis, for in truth it is nothing more, will I think group together more facts than any other suppositions which have been adopted to explain these strange renderings met with in the LXX.,—as, for example, variation of original text, wilful corruption on the part of the translators, Hagadic influence (of which more presently), and the like. The LXX. have executed their work so well, that notwith-

standing this restriction which they thus laid upon themselves, we have a very good translation, which for many centuries was used as the sole representative of the ancient Scriptures, and on which the whole fabric of ancient theology was erected.

This interlinear character, as we may call it, of the version of the LXX., will explain why they render the same Hebrew word by such very different Greek equivalents. In an interlinear translation there is no special value in uniform rendering; rather the reverse. It is better even to study variety than uniformity, although we believe that the LXX. do neither the one nor the other, but simply endeavour to give the best possible rendering of the passage before them. For example, the word חפץ is rendered in chap. iii. 1, 17, v. 8 (7), viii. 6, by *πρᾶγμα*, and in the other three cases in which it occurs, viz., chap. v. 4 (3), xii. 1, 10, by *θέλημα*. Now the real meaning of this word, as we have shown, is an agreeable providential occurrence, or, since all providential occurrences imply the Divine will on their side, any such whatever. The LXX. use the one rendering or the other as best suits the context. This book containing so large a number of technical words, the meaning of which is to be sought by a careful comparison of all the passages in which they occur, the renderings of the LXX. become of special interest. The meaning compounded of the meanings of the LXX.'s renderings, to use a mathematical simile, will give us often the precise shade of signification of the Hebrew of which we are in search, and this will then approve itself as correct by its suitableness in every instance.

The same observation applies to the grammar of the Greek as representing that of the Hebrew. There is no attempt whatever to render Hebrew grammatical forms with any uniformity. Hebrew perfects are rendered by Greek presents, aorists, or perfects; Hebrew presents by aorists or perfects. Participles are rendered sometimes by participles, at others by principal verbs. The same Hebrew prepositions are sometimes rendered by different Greek prepositions, and sometimes simply by case-endings. The relative is rendered by the relative, by the pronoun, and by *ὅτι*. The Hebrew conjugations are not represented on any settled principle; Piels are sometimes indeed apparently marked by a preposition compounded with the verb, sometimes not noticed at all. In certain cases in which the root is doubtful, as for example in ain vaw, and ain ain verbs, the LXX. do not always follow the Masoretic pointing and derivation. On the whole, however, the deviations of the LXX., from both pointing and accentuation, are more apparent than real, and may be explained, for

the most part, on the principle that the translators felt themselves obliged to follow the order of the words in the original.

We must, however, bear in mind that the present text of the LXX. is of all texts the most time-worn, and often requires correction. Most providentially we do not depend on one recension; we have in existing copies the remains of several, and we may make use of them to restore the original readings. The problem in this case differs essentially from that which meets us in revising the Greek text of the New Testament. Here diplomatic evidence has not the same weight as there. Emendations may be detected, even when better readings of the Hebrew, by want of conformity to the Hebrew order (and the temptation to make such kind of alterations, when the version was used independently, would clearly be very great), or again a comparison of the various readings will enable us to guess with tolerable confidence what the Hebrew originally was. In this way, when the Hebrew text is doubtful, we can ascertain the correct reading by searching for that common origin from which the variants in the LXX. were derived, and we may then turn round on the version with the help of the Hebrew, and show how the changes successively arose. An instance of this will be found at chap. x. 10; how far I have succeeded the reader must judge. We must also bear in mind that what we should now denote by marginal renderings are in the ancient versions inserted in the text. The interlinear character of the version enables us to detect this: we find two Greek words standing in place of a single Hebrew equivalent. The result of all this, as applied in the Book of Ecclesiastes, is to vindicate the accuracy of the received Hebrew text, and, in a less degree, of the pointing and accentuation also. Only in a very few instances is it needful to propose an emendation of the Hebrew text, and that where the ancient versions are apparently unanimous in requiring it.

There remains another point, however. Dr. Ginsburg (and from his extensive acquaintance with Jewish literature no one is better qualified to give an opinion) considers that Hagadic influence must be taken largely into account in explaining difficult passages in Ecclesiastes; amongst other points he notices the rendering of את by *σὺν*, which has been referred to already. 'Commentators,' he says, 'have been perplexed to account for this barbarism, and violation of grammatical propriety, but a reference to Hagadic exegesis will show that this Hebrew particle was looked up to as having a mystical signification, because the two letters, א and ת, of which it is composed, are the Alpha and Omega of the Hebrew alphabet.

Hence the anxiety of the translator to indicate this particle in Greek, when a passage appeared to him to be fraught with special mysteries.' But, as he remarks, it is only in twenty-nine instances out of seventy-one occurrences of this particle that it is so rendered by the LXX. Moreover, Dr. Ginsburg has not shown that these passages are specially mysterious. They are in fact neither more nor less so than some others in which this particle is not so rendered. An examination of these passages will show, we think convincingly, that what the LXX. wished to do was to point out that את was emphatic and with the meaning of 'respect to,' or the like, as will be seen by reference to the Commentary, especially chaps. ii. 17, iii. 17, vii. 26, viii. 8, 15.

The Hagadic influence, according to Dr. Ginsburg, is still more evident in the peculiar rendering of chap. ii. 12, as well as chaps. ii. 17, iii. 15, iv. 17, v. 1, all which are fully treated in the Commentary, and the renderings of the LXX. explained and elucidated, it is hoped satisfactorily. So far from the true explanation of these renderings being found in the Chaldee paraphrase, as Dr. Ginsburg imagines, that version gives distorted interpretations of passages but partially understood. Again, the gloss of the LXX. at chap. ii. 15 is shared by the Syriac, and is a marginal reading; chap. ii. 17 is a verbatim reading of the Hebrew in every particular; and the gloss at chap. ii. 9 is too evidently foisted in from the margin to make it of much value in any argument. See note there.

Holding as I do the paramount authority of the LXX., I have not scrupled to follow them against the Masoretic interpretation when the sense of a passage seemed to require it, and I deem it a sufficient answer to any objections on this head, that the rendering proposed is supported by the LXX. On the whole, however, these differences are, as remarked above, not very great, and we have rather occasion for surprise, not that there is here and there a divergence, but that on the whole there is so substantial agreement. The pointing which we have in our Hebrew Bibles embodies a most valuable and venerable tradition, but in its present form younger by centuries than that furnished by the rendering of the LXX. While, therefore, we admit its great value, we ought not to make its authority absolute, and this is done to all intents and purposes by those who reject without question the ancient interpretation because it conflicts with the present pointing. No language is too high to characterize our obligations to those Jewish fathers who have guarded so faithfully that special trust committed to them—the oracles of God. But

the Synagogue is no more infallible in matters of criticism than is the Church. Neither the Masorets nor the LXX. are inspired, though inspiration has been by their respective partisans vehemently claimed for both. Each party, also, has unduly depreciated the other, and the Hebrew scholars have been for centuries divided into punctists and anti-punctists. But as there is no royal road to learning, so there is no short-cut to certainty; the whole evidence, let it come from whence it may, must be diligently weighed and compared. So far as the version of the LXX. is concerned, this is not done until their errors, or supposed errors, have been at least duly explained and accounted for, even when their renderings are rejected.

OTHER VERSIONS OF ANTIQUITY.

Next in order in point of antiquity to the version of the LXX. stands the Syriac Peshito. This I have sometimes quoted in the present Commentary, having considered it my duty to make myself acquainted with this version, so that if I am not in a position to offer anything of my own, I can follow other commentators, and test their accuracy. The citations are made from the edition of Dr. Lee, published by the Bible Society. As might be expected, the Syriac version stands midway between the LXX. and Masoretic text, agreeing sometimes with the one and sometimes with the other. It is often assumed that the peculiar renderings of the Syriac which agree with the LXX. against the Masoretic rendering, arise from corrections of the former text by the latter; this, however, is not proved. The existence of such an element of correction may well be admitted, but it is only one out of many, and in some cases we shall, I think, have reason to conclude that the sense, set aside as of no critical value by some commentators, does in fact embody the real meaning of the passage under discussion. See chap. x. 10 for an instance of this.

The Vulgate is generally accessible; its value is subordinate as compared with the above-mentioned versions, being only, as is well known, corrected from the Hebrew by Jerome. Sometimes, however, the evidence it affords of an ancient reading is all the more valuable on this account. See the note at chap. x. 10.

The fragments of the ancient Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion are often of the very highest value, and diligent use has been made of them. The edition used is that of Field, *Originis Hexapla*, ed. Frid. Field, Oxon. 1867, vol. ii. The

Codex Syriaco Hexaplaris, H. Middedorpf, Berol. 1835, has also been examined.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THIS COMMENTARY.

Two translations of this book are here offered to the reader, the first, dispersed through the notes, denoted by bold-faced type, is absolutely literal, even to utter baldness, and rigidly follows the exact order of the Hebrew. In the accompanying running commentary the construction of the sentences is carefully pointed out, the rendering of the LXX. noted where peculiar, and the attempt made in all cases to account for the peculiarity, either by showing that they have preserved the true interpretation, or else explaining how the error arose. The sense thus obtained is embodied in the paraphrastic version printed at the head of the page. There has been no attempt made to adopt, in this latter translation, the phraseology of the Authorized Version; rather the reverse, as it is not intended to be independent, but is to be regarded as of the nature of an explanatory commentary or an English Targum upon the text. It also seeks to render idea for idea rather than word for word, and gives in every case the meaning which on the whole seemed most probable, and squared best with the context. It attempts also to represent equivokes and alliterations in the original, by corresponding equivokes and alliterations—not necessarily in the equivalent words of the translation,—and points out, by figures, italics, and other typographical signs, instances of artificial arrangement of topics and the like; see Chaps. I. and II., etc. To the English reader a caution is here needed. The very nature of such a version requires that all be made to run quite smoothly; thus, however obscure the passage, a sense is given, and difficulties are put out of sight. But after all this only represents the meaning the commentator thinks most probable, and he may be quite wrong, and altogether mistaken. Such a version is after all a Targum—in other words, a well-meaning attempt at explanation, with some amplification, of the sacred text. In dealing then with it let the reader imitate the Jews of old, who, when they read the sacred text itself, did so with every outward manifestation of respect and deference; but when they came to read the Targum altered their manner, and showed by posture and gesture that they clearly regarded this as but a mere exposition of the Divine Word, and of no authority.

The following works are assumed to be easily accessible to English readers:—*Ecclesiastes,* Theodore Preston, Lond. 1845; *Commentary on Ecclesiastes,* Moses Stuart, New York, 1851; *Coheleth,* by Chris-

tian D. Ginsburg, Lond. 1861; *Ecclesiastes or Koheleth,* by Dr. Otto Zöckler, edited by Prof. Taylor Lewis, LL.D., Edin. 1870; *Commentary on the Bible,* C. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, Lond. 1868. The work of Dr. Ginsburg especially will be found indispensable. Dr. Ginsburg has stated at length, and for the most part in the writers' own words, the different opinions of critics, Jewish and Christian, who have written on this book. His vast reading and erudition are thus made available for future scholars. Once for all, I must acknowledge the deep obligation I am under to his work. If in many of my renderings I am compelled to differ from him, I am not the less indebted to him on that account. If I have really seen further than he has, it is only because he has, so to speak, allowed me to mount on his shoulders. Any one who takes the trouble to compare my work with his will see that most of my renderings could have been supported by a name of weight. If, however, I have the authority of the LXX. in my favour, I am content, and cite no others. I have, however, not failed to resort to such of the commentators in Dr. Ginsburg's list, German and English, as well as some published since the appearance of his book, as would be likely to give additional light.

The work of Dr. Graetz, *Kohelet oder der Salomonische Prediger,* von Dr. H. Graetz, Leipzig, 1871, did not come to hand until the larger portion of this commentary was in type.

The texts made use of are those contained in the *Polyglotten Bibel, zum praktischen Handgebrauch bearbeitet* von R. Stier, und R. G. W. Theile, Dritte Auflage, Bielfeld, 1864.

The following notation of MS. and Editions from the above work is adopted in the commentary :—

A Alexandrine text.
A^1 Alexandrine Manuscript.
A^2 Alexandrine Edition, Grabe, Breitinger, Reineccius.
B Vatican text.
B^1 Vatican Manuscript.
B^2 Roman Edition, 1587.
C Codex Frid. August. (of Tischendorf.)
D Codex Ephraemi rescript. (of Tischendorf.)
E Editio Aldina, 1518.
F Complutensium Polyglot.
X Other MS. not especially named.

It may also be noticed that all citations are from chapter and verse as in the Authorized Version; where these differ from the Hebrew, the latter is added in a bracket—thus chap. v. 9 (8).

ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER I.

THE words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity.

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

I. (1.) **The words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.** The meaning of the term Koheleth, and the question of authorship of the book, is discussed in the introduction. We have only to remark here on the use of the word דבר as it occurs in this book in the technical sense not only of a 'word' or 'reason,' but also including the matter or thing which the word represents. Usually it refers to words, reasonings, and matters connected with the mysteries of Providence —the whole treatise itself being argumentative and didactic, discussing the vanity, that is, the transitoriness, of human existence, as its topic.

(2.) **Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth; vanity of vanities** (very emphatic), **the whole** (הכל, with the article giving a slightly different notion to כל, the 'whole collectively' therefore; the word is equivalent to the Greek τὸ πᾶν, with the limitation however to human life in this world, as will become manifest in the course of the book) **is vanity,** (הבל, that which is 'evanescent' or 'transitory,' but never used in the modern sense of being frivolous or empty.) There is nothing of scoffing epicureanism in this book; the life of man is ever spoken of in the most serious and solemn tones. There is, indeed, much sarcasm, but it never touches upon lightness or indifference; it is always grave and solemn, and even when to superficial observation appearing equivocal or sceptical, proves, on further examination, to hide promises and hopes beneath its bitterness. This first verse may be looked upon as the text or topic of the discourse; Koheleth next proceeds to work out the argument suggested by it in detail.

(3.) **What is?** (expecting the answer no, and so nearly equivalent to a denial) **the profit** (יתרון, a word peculiar to this book—occurs chap. i. 3; ii. 11, 13 twice; iii. 9; v. 9 (8), 16 (15); vii. 12; x. 10, 11—*i.e.* ten times in all; it is a technical word, and is used to signify that which *remains* over and above after the act is performed, and apart from its present results. Koheleth uses frequently these nouns ending in ון—thus יתר 'to extend,' 'run over,' יתרון 'remainder,' זכר 'remember,' זכרון 'remembrance,' etc. These nouns are in their nature abstracts, but differ from the ordinary abstracts; see chap. i. 14) **to man** (לאדם, this word occurs in its different combinations forty-eight times in this book, and always with the signification of man as a member of the human race. There is a tone of personification about the word similar to that which occurs in the expression 'the old

TITLE.

THE discourse of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.

SECTION I.—*The vanity or evanescence of all things human.*

Utterly evanescent, utterly evanescent, saith the Preacher; the whole is evanescent.

Is there any profitable result to Humanity in all his cares, over which he ever moils, in this hot work-day world? [No, for]

Adam;' when this generic character is not to be expressed, then איש or אנוש is used instead; see chaps. i. 8; ix. 14 and 15), **in all his toil** (עמל, a favourite word of Koheleth, and used as frequently in this book as in all the rest of Scripture put together. The exact meaning to be affixed to it, and which, carefully kept in view, will be found to explain more than one otherwise obscure passage, is that toil, care, or anxiety which labour produces, and answers to the idea contained in our metaphor 'takes *pains;*' see chap. ii. 20), **which he toils at** (this is the first instance which occurs of the contracted relative ש־ joined to the word. Koheleth uses also the full relative אשר, but with a slight difference of meaning. The contracted relative refers to the word only which it joins, and in case of verbs often gives a subjunctive or optative meaning; the full relative refers back to the whole idea or clause. Hence the meaning of this passage is this, 'Is there any abiding advantage to humanity of the pains of his labouring in so far as he does take pains, or toils') **under the sun** (or in this present state of existence). The phrase תחת השמש occurs twenty-five times in this book, and is always expressive of a limitation. It shows that what is affirmed is to be understood as confined to its relation to this sublunary existence only. The idea implied is that of man toiling under the sun in the heat of the day in the sweat of his brow (Gen. iii. 17), and earnestly desiring the shadow (Job vii. 2), which shadow is yet the symbol of decaying life. It is true that Ecclesiastes is never quoted in the New Testament, but there are certainly several allusions to it, more or less direct; one of these apparently occurs Rev. vii. 16: *οὐ πεινάσουσιν ἔτι, οὐδὲ διψήσουσιν ἔτι, οὐδ' οὐ μὴ πέσῃ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὁ ἥλιος, οὐδὲ πᾶν καῦμα*—'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them by day, nor any heat.' The Chaldee Targum expresses this idea quaintly but forcibly: 'What advantage is there to a man after his death from all his labour which he laboured under the sun in this world, except he studied the word of God, in order to receive a good reward in the world to come from before the Lord of the world?' In order to remind the reader of this meaning of the words 'under the sun,' I have whenever they occur paraphrased them by 'in this hot work-day world'—not that this paraphrase is quite satisfactory, but it is the best I could find.

To answer the above question, Koheleth cites *eight* different instances; four from natural, and four from moral experience.

4 *One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and [1]hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they [2]return again.

8 All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it:* the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

[1] *Heb.* panteth. [2] *Heb.* return to go.

These we might call the eight *un*beatitudes of this sermon.

(4.) **A generation comes** (*i.e.* proceeds; the word occurs five times in the passage). **A generation sets** (using exactly the same word as for the setting of the sun in the next verse), **but the earth to the age abideth** (*i.e.* remains the same as it was 'to the age' לעלם—this word is used in a technical sense, and occurs chaps. i. 4, 10; ii. 16; iii. 11, 14; ix. 6; and xii. 5 in this book. The LXX. render by *αἰων*, which Bengel says is 'sæculum præsens, mundus in sua indole cursu et censu.' Hengstenberg observes that it is not an absolutely endless eternity, but only a future of unlimited length. Bengel's definition, 'the present period in its quality, course, and account,' is exactly what the word signifies in this book. It is to be noticed that each instance of change is followed by a sentence which points out that this change is resultless. In the first, the fluctuating and fleeting generations or life-periods of man contrast with the absolute endurance of an unchanged order of things). 'The great mill-wheel of existence only revolves for the same cogs to come uppermost again and again.'—[Hamilton, *Royal Preacher.*]

(5.) **And rises** (*i.e.* 'bursts out' or 'irradiates') **the sun, and sets the sun** (as 'sun' is repeated, the second is equivalent to that same sun) **and towards his place panting** (this word 'pant,' שׁאף, occurs Job vii. 2; Ps. lvii. 3; Ps. cxix. 131, and denotes earnest desire: the metaphor is a very beautiful one in this context)—**rising** (irradiating) **is he there.**

(6.) **Going** (*i.e.* 'walking,' 'proceeding,' as in ver. 4) **towards the south** (the quarter of warm winds), and **turning round towards the north** (the place of cold), **turning turns, going the wind** (there is in the Hebrew a concourse of sibilant letters imitating the sound of the wind, which is attempted to be rendered in the paraphrase), **and in its turnings returns the wind** (that is, ever goes round in the same circuits, as the A. V. translates). Thus we have an allusion to the four cardinal points of the universe, N. S., E., and W.

I. A generation comes, and that generation departs. But the earth the same abides.

II. Bursts forth the sun, and sets that sun again; and wearily advancing, bursts forth as he did before.

III. Going southwards, and twisting northwards, twisting, twisting goes the blast; and so with all its twistings the wind returns.

IV. All the torrents are running towards the sea, that sea which never overflows; to the place where these torrents are hastening, thither they are only returning to go back.

V. All matters are fatiguing; impossible for any one to reason out. Never is the eye satisfied by seeing, nor ever the ear filled with sound.

VI. Whatever has been? 'tis just the same as will be; and whatever has been done? 'tis just the same as will be done. So there is nothing altogether new within this work-day world.

VII. [No doubt] there occurs a matter such that people *say*, See, now this is really new. The present was it once in some age before our time.

(7.) **All the torrents** (נחל, a mountain stream especially) **are going to the sea, and the sea it is not full** (equivalent to 'that sea which is never filled or any fuller'), **to the place** to **which the rivers** (contract relative, meaning these *same* rivers) **are going, thence are they returning to go back.** (So the LXX.; others with the A. V. translate, 'Thither they return again.') It is to be remarked that this fact is scientifically accurate in statement. The Targum has the gloss that the rivers flow into the ocean which *surrounds the world like a ring*, and that they return again through the *subterranean channels*, but Koheleth knows nothing of such false philosophy.

(8.) **All the words** (with the article, and therefore generic; 'matters' or 'things,' in the technical sense of things reasoned about, see ver. 1) **are fatiguing** (so the LXX. and Vulgate; Ginsburg has 'feeble;' Preston, 'in activity;' and Hengstenberg, 'all words become weary;' but the ancient Vv. make better sense with the context), **not possible is it for a man** (not אדם here, but איש = 'one,' or 'any one') **to utter** them (לדבר, 'to speak rationally concerning them,' and so to account for their existence or explain their nature. The impossibility of exhausting a subject by talking or reasoning about it is here the point, as is evident from the order of the words); **not satisfied** (answering to the 'not possible' above) **is the eye with seeing, and not is filled the ear by sound** (or by what it hears). So then, while the consideration of any matter is pretty sure to produce weariness, it is quite certain not to produce satisfaction.

(9.) **What is that which has been? it is the same which will be; and what is that which has been done? it is the same which will be done** (so the LXX., literally following the Heb. text), **and there is nothing all new under the sun.** The A.V. understands by this 'no new thing;' but the peculiar position of this word 'all' seems to imply that 'nothing' must be taken with some slight qualification,—nothing morally new. The next verse admits material novelty.

(10.) **There is** (יש, which is so far different from היה that it assumes the existence as a

11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things;* neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

12 ¶ I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man [1]to be exercised therewith.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

[1] *Or,* to afflict them.

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fact, 'There really are matters which are called new') **a matter which** one **says** (contracted relative joined to the verb, and giving an emphasis to it, equivalent therefore to our 'of which it may be *said*, indeed') **see this new it is** (emph.) **the present** (כבר occurs eight times, viz., i. 10, ii. 12, 16, iii. 15 twice, iv. 2, vi. 10, and ix. 6, 7—in Ecclesiastes only; it is a technical word used to denote the present state of things, that part of the עלם or 'age' which is now in existence. In the later Hebrew and Syriac it is used as an adverb, 'already,' but that is not its use here. This remark is the more important because it is one of those so-called Aramaic words, the occurrence of which is supposed to indicate the late period of this book's composition. A careful observance of its real import will throw considerable light on several very obscure passages. Generally, it may be taken for granted that if Koheleth uses a new word or form not known in other parts of the Scriptures, it is because he desires to indicate a new idea.) **It was to the ages which** (full relative, referring back, therefore, to the whole sentence) **were from before us** (as we have ages in the plural, followed by a singular verb, היה, the meaning is some one of the ages). This thing which is said to be new is really one of those forgotten matters which existed in one or other of the eras which were before our time.

(11.) **There is nothing** of **remembrance** (or memorial) **to former** events (or persons) **and in addition to succeeding** events **which will be. There will not be to them** (emph.) **a remembrance** (the repetition of this word shows it to be the prominent word of the sentence) **amongst those which shall be to** (*i.e.* belonging to) the **last** of all (so the LXX.) We have here the fem. form, אחרנה. Koheleth usually expresses the abstracts by this form, and so here. Thus, then, we find that history always repeats itself: not so, however, that its events can be anticipated, but always so that its teachings may be forgotten.

This then forms the first division of the book. By these eight instances Koheleth proves the existence of unceasing toilsome care and resultless progression in all human things. He proceeds in the next place to give his own personal experience, in the form of an autobiography to the same effect. All commentators, even those who deny that Solomon himself was the author of this book, are agreed that he is the hero, and that his life and experience form the groundwork of what is here set before us.

(12.) **I** (emphatic) **Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem.** Ginsburg supposes that by this declaration that he *was* king, he intends to imply that he was so no

VIII. There is no remembrance of former matters; and so also with regard to subsequent ones which will be, there will be no remembrance with those who will succeed them.

SECTION II.—*Containing a more formal discussion of the problem of human existence, drawn from the Preacher's own observation and experience.*

Now, I myself, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem, and I took the greatest pains to seek out and to investigate by means of wisdom everything that is done within the limits of this world; how it is a painful uncertainty appointed of God to the human race that they should be distracted with it. I perceived with respect to all the actions whatsoever, in so far as they are performed within this work-day world, that they are certainly all of them (1.) evan-

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longer; but not only does the LXX. render by an imperfect, but the same word occurs in precisely the same form at Ex. ii. 22, and clearly at the time there mentioned Moses continued to be a stranger in Midian. The object in stating this fact is rather to show that as a king he possessed peculiar facilities for making the investigation, an account of which follows.

(13.) **And I set my heart** (gave great pains to, or thought much on, see i. 17, vii. 21, viii. 9, 10; Dan. x. 12; 1 Chron. xxii. 19) **to inquiring** (דרשׁ, being used of something lost or hidden, Gen. xxv. 22, Deut. xxii. 2) **and to investigating** (תור, refers to spying out or searching, Num. xiii. 15, chap. vii. 25) **in wisdom** (the A. V. considers that wisdom was the means by which inquiry was made) **concerning** (על, over) **all which** (equivalent to 'all that which') **is done** (but being niphal it has an objective sense, and includes what is suffered) **under the heavens** (this formula occ. chap. ii. 3, and iii. 1, and is of larger import than under the sun) **it is** ('I mean that' is the equivalent expression in English) **uncertainty** (ענין, this is another technical word, it occ. eight times, chap. i. 13, ii. 23, 26, iii. 10, iv. 8, v. 3 (4), viii. 16, and a careful comparison of places will show that the meaning is 'uncertainty,' accompanied with 'anxiety' as to what is to happen in the future) **which is an evil** (for it is without the article) **given of God** (without the article; because God is here used personally, it is nom. to נתן of course, but as the nom. follows the verb, this is the best way of rendering in this case) **to the sons of the Adam** (the 'whole human race' is the meaning of this form), that they may be **made anxious** (LXX. τοῦ περισπᾶσθαι) **therewith** (emphatic).

(14.) **I have seen** (I have observed, that is) **with respect to all actions** (את is here emphatic as standing first) **which are performed** (hiph. and contracted relative, hence having the meaning in so far as they are or may be done) **under the sun** (for without this limitation the above proposition would not be true), **and behold** (asserting a matter of fact patent to all) **the whole** (with the article and in its usual sense, see chap. i. 2) is **a vanity** (*i.e.* an instance of something evanescent) **and a vexation of spirit** (רעות, occ. seven times in this book, viz., chaps. i. 14, ii. 11, 17, 26, iv. 4, 6, and vi. 9; רעיון occ. three times, i. 17, ii. 22, iv. 16. These words have usually been regarded as absolutely synonymous, and hitherto the difference of meaning has not been noticed; but there is a slight difference, as a comparison of places will show. The exact sense to be attached to them is a matter of dispute, and 'a windy notion,' 'striving

15 *That which is* crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is [1]wanting cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart [2]had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

[1] *Heb.* defect.

[2] *Heb.* had seen much.

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after the wind,' have been proposed, but the rendering of the LXX., *προαίρεσις*, 'distraction,' represents the meaning best. With regard to רעות we may notice that it is formed quite regularly from רעה, which is 'evil,' in the sense of something that 'hurts' or 'offends,' and is in the nature of a collective plural; so do we account at once for the peculiar pointing and for the rendering of the LXX. On the other hand, רעיון has, as nouns with this termination usually have, a more subjective meaning; the distinction between the two is that between 'vexations of' and 'vexing of' spirit; thus in ver. 17, where the trouble came from his own spirit, caused by his inability to explain the difficulty which confronted him in his argument, Koheleth uses the subjective form).

(15.) **A crookedness** (occ. chaps. vii. 13, xii. 3, and Amos viii. 5, whence it appears that the precise meaning is moral obliquity) **not enabled to be set in order** (occ. chap. i. 15, vii. 18, xii. 9, only), **a defect** (occ. h. o. but see Deut. xxviii. 48, 57, where the root is used of famine, and 1 Kings xvii. 16, to denote the failure of the oil) **not enabled** (repeated, hence we must render 'it is *equally* impossible') **to be numbered** (inf. pl. niphal). The meaning of this verse has been very much disputed, but if it be considered as the sequel to what went immediately before, the sense will be quite plain. We may discern in it a fourfold description of human life, in respect of its cares and anxieties and uncertainties, the first point being (i.) that this care is for something evanescent; (ii.) that it is vexatious; (iii.) and then this anxiety is useless, because life is so perverted as to be beyond the possibility of being set in order by any care of ours; (iv.) and so defective that no account can be given which would set it right: 'which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?'

(16.) **Reasoned I myself together with my heart to say** (as reasoned stands first, this is the subject of the whole, and the words 'to say,' לאמר, are the usual formula of introduction of the thing said; they are equivalent to our 'to this effect.' This then is Koheleth's reasoning, the result of which is to be given), **I behold** (stating it as an admitted and patent fact) **I have been made great, and I have been added to in wisdom above all which were before me in Jerusalem, and my heart has seen the much** (with the article expressed; equivalent therefore to very much, or as much as possible of) **wisdom and knowledge.**

(17.) **And I have given my heart in order to know wisdom** (that is, he made wisdom his special study and object) **and the knowledge of** ('know' being repeated rises into special prominence, and hence the meaning is to know wisdom, or to be wise enough to recognise) **false expectations and prudences.** (This passage is one of great difficulty, but the exact sense will become apparent on investigating the meaning of the two words הוללות and שכלות; now הוללות occurs chap. i. 17, ii. 12, vii. 25,

escent, (2.) a vexation of spirit, (3.) a perplexity which it is impossible to set right, (4.) a defect which it is equally impossible to account for.

I reasoned over the matter with my own heart to this effect. I who have, it appears, become greater and more advanced in wisdom than any who were before me in Jerusalem, and experienced over the widest extent of wisdom and knowledge, and have set my heart earnestly to know wisdom, and to know false successes from real acts of prudence, know but this: it is simply vexing one's spirit; because, in increasing wisdom, there is an increase also of disappointment, and what adds to one's knowledge adds to one's sorrow.

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ix. 3, and pointed with Shurek at x. 13, and is peculiar to Ecclesiastes. It is a technical word, and is correctly translated 'folly,' but it is that kind of folly which displays itself in false joy. The fut. poel from which this noun is derived occurs Job xii. 17, chap. vii. 7, Isa. xliv. 25; and the participle at chap. ii. 2, Ps. cii. 89. Thus we see the connexion between this sense and the more ordinary one of 'praise;' it is the 'bepraised' used in a bad sense. The word שכלות occurs here only, but it is rendered by the LXX. *ἐπιστήμη*, and by the Syriac ܣܟܠܬܢܘܬ, comp. also Gen. xli. 33, with the meaning 'prudence,' and with this agrees the later Hebrew. Now these meanings make consistent sense. Koheleth wished to know wisdom and the knowledge of folly and prudence; in other words, to have a wisdom which could tell the one from the other. Thus the LXX. render "הל by *παραβολὰς*, which A^2 has altered into *περιφορὰν*; this apparently very strange rendering is thus intelligible enough, especially to those who had the Hebrew before them. To alter the text to סכלות, as some have proposed, is not even to cut the Gordian knot, for with the true meaning of this word, 'clever-folly,' 'false-wisdom,' no better sense will be made, although it is quite possible that "שכ may have been chosen for the equivoke it gives, not even differing in sound, if the pointing can be trusted, from "סכ. The truth is that so much of our elaborate wisdom and best plans are but elaborate mistakes, that to attempt to judge the one from the other is a hopeless task. Hence then the following) **I know** (this is the fourth time this word occurs in the clause, thus it is brought out with the very strongest prominence, and gives the meaning 'what I do know is') **that even this** (שגם, comp. places ch. ii. 15, viii. 14, has a peculiar meaning, expressive of surprise that this should be so) really **is vexing of spirit** (רעיון, not רעות as above; because in this case the vexation is subjective, —the idea conveyed by the whole passage being 'what I do know as the result of my wisdom and knowledge being just even this, that it is only a vexing of the spirit').

(18.) **For** (introducing a reason for this conclusion as follows) **in much wisdom is much grief** (grief in the sense of 'vexation,' caused by disappointment—see chap. ii. 23, vii. 3, 9, xi. 10, 1 Sam. i. 6. The LXX. translate by *γνώσις*, 'knowledge'! Is it possible that they intended to refer to Gen. ii. xvii., using *γνώσις* in a bad sense?) **and** he that **increases knowledge increases sorrow** (chap. ii. 23; Ex. iii. 7, of the Israelitish sorrows at the hands of their task-masters). 'In a world like this much science is much sorrow, for it is the knowledge of penury, the statistics of starvation, the assurance that our case is desperate.'—[Hamilton.]

Even the wisdom of Solomon having failed to find any solution of the problem of human anxiety, he next tries mirth, but with no better success. This experiment takes only two verses to record, for it was but soon over.

CHAPTER II.

I SAID in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also *is* vanity.

2 I said of laughter, *It is* mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?

3 I sought in mine heart [1]to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven [2]all the days of their life.

4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

[1] *Heb.* to draw my flesh with wine.

[2] *Heb.* the number of the days of their life.

II. (1.) **I said, even I** (the personal pronoun is not redundant, it indicates that Koheleth is recording his own experience), **in my heart** (this formula usually introduces in this book a thought more specious than true), **Come now, I will try thee with mirth and see into good** (*i.e.* still addressing his heart, 'to see a real good;' טוב is used in this book as a technical word, like *bonum* in the *summum bonum*); **and behold** (stating a manifest fact) **also this** (emphatic, signifying this same mirth) is a **vanity** (an evanescent thing; joy or mirth then is too short-lived to be considered a real good).

(2.) **To laughter I said, Madness** (that which is made mad, see note to chap. i. 17), and **to pleasure** (or mirth), **What doth that do?** (as this expects the answer No, it is very nearly equivalent to 'It *does* nothing.') (The Syriac reads here סכנן וסבי, 'What is the usefulness,' 'gratification,' or 'delight'? It seems then as if the translators of this version recognised a play upon the words מה הולל, 'what a folly,' and מהולל, 'befooled,'—this being one of those equivokes in which Koheleth delights. The LXX. render verbatim, as is their custom, τί τοῦτο ποιεῖς; 'why doest thou this?' but possibly with the same intention.

Koheleth next tries material enjoyment. The meaning of the following passage has been much disputed; we shall follow the rendering suggested by the LXX., which gives clear and intelligible sense.

(3.) **I investigated with my heart** (or *in* my heart; but the former makes better sense. His heart was the medium through which the investigation was made. He wanted to see if material enjoyment would satisfy his heart, *i.e.* the emotional part of his nature) **in order to a drawing with wine** (the LXX. render ὡς οἶνον, '*as* wine,' but they probably did not read otherwise than our present text, for this *as* represents the את which follows) **as to my flesh** (the meaning of the Hebrew is that he drew or enticed with wine with respect to his flesh, and that hence his object in using the wine was to entice the flesh. The rendering of the LXX. is *ad sensum*, preserving also a rendering of each word), **and my heart led** (*i.e.* as a man leads an animal, Ps. lxxx. 1, Isa. xi. 6. As 'heart' is repeated, we have the meaning 'that same heart') **with wisdom** (because unless he enjoyed wisely he would not enjoy at all) **and** (repeated in

SAID then I in my heart, Come now, I will try thee with mirth, and so get a sight of a real-good; but see now, this is altogether an evanescent thing. Of laughter, I said Delirium: and of mirth, What will *that* do?

I tried with my heart to allure as wine does one's flesh (that heart, however, being conducted with wisdom), and so get a hold over *false* wisdom, so that I might see thereby where lies the real good to the children of men, when they are working in *this* world, as the tale of their daily lives. [Accordingly]

I increased my works.

(1.) I built for *myself* houses.

(2.) I planted for *myself* vineyards.

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the same clause, equal therefore to 'and so') **to lay hold of false wisdom** (סכלות, occurs chaps. ii. 3, 12, 13, vii. 25, x. 1, 13, and is peculiar to this book. The LXX. render εὐφροσύνην 'pleasure,' which, however A^2 alters to ἀφροσύνη, 'folly,' the reason of which will appear presently. The meaning of the root סכל is to 'play,' or 'act the fool,' and in this respect differs from כסל, which has the idea of 'stupidity,' and in the hiphil form, 'made stupid,' or 'befooled.' In all the ten places in which the root סכל occurs in other parts of Scripture, we find the meaning of elaborateness and subtilty as well as folly; comp. 1 Sam. xiii. 13, Saul's burnt-offering in the absence of Samuel; 2 Sam. xxiv. 10; 1 Chron. xxi. 8, David's numbering the people; 2 Chron. xvi. 9, Asa's reliance on Syria; 2 Sam. xv. 31, Ahithophel's counsel; similarly Isa. xliv. 25, where knowledge is said to be misused; so also סַכְלֻת, occurs Jer. iv. 22, v. 21, has evidently the same shade of meaning. It is hard to find a single word which will render it; 'foolish wisdom' or 'clever follies' are the best combinations that occur. It will be seen also, in referring to the lexicon, that the LXX., who translate by εὐφροσύνη, apparently use the word occasionally in a sinister aspect, see Prov. xxx. 32, Sir. xiii. 8. The Syriac here reads ܫܘܒܠܢܘܬܐ (see i. 17), 'prudence,' 'intelligence,' contrary to its interpretation in other places. On the whole, however, it is not difficult to see why the LXX. rendered as they did. That this pleasure was of a bad kind, or deceptive, the sequel shows, but it may be doubted whether their rendering preserved the meaning of סכ״, even if, which is not impossible, they themselves understood it). **Until I** should **see where** (in the sense of whereabouts, see 1 Sam. ix. 8) is **this good to the sons of Adam, which** (full relative, referring back to the whole idea, equivalent therefore to 'what *good* it is which') **they do under the sun the number of the days of their lives** (this phrase occurs ch. ii. 3, v. 18 (17), vi. 12, as 'the tale,' or 'account of the days,' of their lives; an additional limitation to the words 'under the sun'). In making this experiment he began to *work* and *toil* more than ever.

(4.) **I increased my work, I built for myself** (this emphatic 'myself' occurs eight times in the passage, and is therefore its key-word) **houses, I planted for myself vineyards.**

5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all *kind of* fruits:

6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

7 I got *me* servants and maidens, and had [1]servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* [2]musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

[1] *Heb.* sons of my house. [2] *Heb.* musical instruments and instruments.

(5.) **I made for myself gardens and parks, and planted in them trees of every kind of fruit.**

(6.) **I made for myself pools of water to irrigate from them the meadows shooting forth trees.** (This, which contains 'for myself' *four* times, the first *half* of the seven, consists of an enumeration of immoveable objects, or what the law calls real property, the others which follow are moveables or personal.)

(7.) **I obtained slaves and maidens, and sons of my house** (home-born slaves, that is) **were** belonging to **myself, besides possessions of herd and flock; many** such were belonging **to myself, more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.**

(8.) **I gathered for myself, moreover, silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and the provinces. I made for myself** (*i.e.* procured) **men-singers and women-singers, the delights of the sons of men, outpouring and outpourers.** (The different meanings given to these two last words, שדה ושדות, which occur here only, are various, scarcely a commentary or version agreeing. The LXX. translate a 'butler' and 'female cup-bearers,' the Vulgate 'pitchers and vases,' Ginsburg 'a concubine and concubines'; but the most probable etymology seems to give the idea of 'overflowing' to the word in some sense or other. It is possible then to take the words generally, and interpret them as referring to the overflow, not only of the generous wines, but of all the delights of which wine is a type, as in the words 'The feast of reason and the flow of soul,' or like Milton's—

'Did ever mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?'

The arrangement of these different objects of pleasure is somewhat artificial, as will be seen on examining the grouping.)

(9.) **And I was great** (rightly the A. V.,

(3.) I made for *myself* gardens and parks, and planted in them fruit-trees of every kind.

(4.) I made for *myself* reservoirs with which to irrigate meadows and growing copses.

(5.) I purchased slaves and maidens, and had for *myself* home-born servants, besides herds of great and small cattle, more numerous than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem.

(6.) I procured for *myself* silver and gold and precious objects of every kingdom and province.

(7.) I obtained for *myself* men-singers and women-singers, every delight that man can enjoy, to the very ecstasy of ravishment.

So I was great and increased more than all that were ever before me in Jerusalem, yet notwithstanding my wisdom remained fast with *myself*, and *all* my eyes desired I kept not from them, nor did I deny my heart even one of *all* its joys: for this heart of mine did rejoice in my toils, and this was what I procured for *all* my toil. So I turned to look on *all* my work my hand had wrought, and *all* my toil which I had moiled and done, and lo! that ALL was—evanescent, and vexation of spirit, and nothing of profit in this hot work-day world.

'*so*,' referring back to ver. 4) **and increased more than all** (*all* now becomes the key-word, which occurs seven times) **which was** (singular, giving the sense than 'any was') **before me in Jerusalem; also** (אַף, affirms strongly, see Job iv. 19, 'but beside,' for without this provision of a wise enjoyment the experiment was necessarily a failure:) **my wisdom remained** (*i.e.* stood; it is usual to say that עָמְדָה is fem. to agree with חָכְמָה; perhaps it would be equally correct to say that it was an instance of two abstract ideas in apposition, giving the sense 'was still a thing standing') **with myself** (emphatic, and the eighth repetition of this word).

(10.) **And all which asked mine eyes I did not restrain** (or keep back; see Gen. xxvii. 36, Num. xi. 17, for the meaning, the only other instances where it occurs in Kal.) **from them** (emphatic), **I did not deny my heart from all rejoicing, for my heart rejoiced from all my toil** (*i.e.* there was a certain kind of pleasure derived from doing all this), **and this was my portion** ('lot' or 'inheritance' from all my toil; equal to our 'this was all I obtained for my pains').

(11.) **I turned myself** (פָּנָה differs from סָבַב; the former is 'to turn round in order to look,' the latter is to 'go round in order to do.' The distinction is not without importance) **in all my works which worked my hands, and in my toil which I had toiled to work** (notice the occurrence of these words—work, work, toil, toil), **and behold** (a manifest and indisputable conclusion) **the whole** was **vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was nothing of profit** (*i.e.* over and above the slight amount of present pleasure which he obtained) **under the sun.** (It is especially worthy of remark that while Koheleth found some small pleasure *in* work, he found none *from* it. Take, oh men, to your curse kindly, but a curse it is!)

12 ¶ And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? [1]*even* that which hath been already done.

13 Then I saw [2]that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

[1] *Or*, in those things which have been already done.
[2] *Heb.* that there is an excellency in wisdom more than in folly, etc.

(12.) **And I turned** (this coming immediately after a similar expression, ver. 11, rises into emphasis; it equals our 'again I turned'), **I myself** (emph., it was, as above, a personal experience), **to see wisdom and self-deceptions and also false successes** (the meaning of this passage most probably is, that Koheleth desired to see wisdom in conjunction with those two kinds of folly which he denotes respectively by הוללות, false expectations or hopes, see chap. i. 17, and סכלות, false wisdom, that kind of folly which is so either through ignorance or sin, but has to all appearance the semblance of wisdom, see chap. ii. 3. If he could succeed in accomplishing this, he might by his wisdom avoid the mistakes into which men fall). **For** (this must introduce a reason) **what?** (Gen. xx. 10, מָה, Gen. iv. 10, מֶה, both forms being similar in use) **is the man** (with the article; generic therefore, and equivalent to 'what is the man?') **who enters** (but as this is the contracted relative, it is equivalent to 'that he should enter') **after** (but the word is strictly speaking a noun pl. in regimen, and means 'that which comes after,' 'the sequel of') **the king** (this the LXX. render by *βουλῆς*, the reasons of which we will discuss presently). **With respect to which** (for the אֵת is emphatic, hence some of the recensions of the LXX. read *σὺν τὰ ὅσα*) **the present** (the present state of things, כבר in its usual meaning, which it has everywhere in Ecclesiastes, see chap. i. 10) **they make it** עשוהו, third person plural with the affix, which the LXX. refer back to המלך. The meaning of this passage has been much disputed, and our difficulties are not diminished by the very strange rendering of the LXX., which is usually dismissed by commentators as erroneous; an explanation, however, of this rendering will probably clear up the difficulty. We must first notice the corrupt state of the present text of the LXX. The Alexandrine reads *ὅτι τίς ἄνθρωπος ἐπελεύσεται ὀπίσω τῆς βουλῆς τὰ ὅσα ἐποίησαν αὐτήν*; E. X. read *πάντα ὅσα*; F. X. *σὺν τὰ ὅσα*; B. X. *ἐποίησεν*; and X. *αὐτή*; Aquila reads *ὃς ἐπιλεύσεται ὀπίσω τοῦ βασιλέως*; Symmachus, *τί δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἵνα παρακολουθήσῃ βουλῇ*; Theodotion, *ὃς ἐλεύσεται ὀπίσω τοῦ βασιλέως*; but, as Field remarks (Hexapl. p. 384), it is doubtful whether the Syriac text reads ܡܠܟܐ, 'king,' or ܡܠܟܐ, 'counsel.' In the same way, Theodotion reads *σὺν τὰ ὅσα ἐποίησαν αὐτην*.

We must observe that all these versions, without exception, omit to notice כבר, which everywhere else is noted by *ἤδη*, being content with *τὰ ὅσα* or *σὺν τὰ ὅσα*. The explanation of these difficulties seems to be that המלך was probably intended to be equivocal. It is, to say the least, not impossible that it had, even in Solomon's time, the meaning of 'counsel,' which attaches to it as a usual signification in Aramaic; if so, המלך means *the* counsel, and of course has the idea of rule as well. Castell gives as the meaning of ܡܠܟ, 'Intellectum, Consilium dedit,' vel 'inivit,' 'Consultavit,' 'Promisit,' 'Pollicitus est;' thus we must

Then I turned myself again to perceive wisdom in regard to [its power of detecting] *false* hopes and *false* prudence, for how is any man to enter upon the results of that plan which he may have made beforehand? Now, I have myself perceived that there must be a profit to wisdom over false prudence as great as the profit of light over darkness. The wise has eyes in his head, the befooled is wandering in the dark; yet I know, as the result of my own experience, that the event to which both attain is just alike, so I reasoned with myself thus: Exactly the same event as happens to one befooled has happened to me, and therefore why should I make myself wise?

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understand it to mean, 'plans formed and intended to be carried out.' The question then which Koheleth asks is this, 'Who is the man who will enter upon—as we say, *carry out*—his plans with respect to that which in the present moment he makes them or devises them;' in other words, can he carry out what he now devises, and can *any* man do this out of the number of human creatures who make these plans? This is the reason of the distributive plural which the best recensions of the LXX. preserve. The equivoke involved in the meaning 'king' is obvious. Koheleth himself is, of course, *the* king: could any one do better than he? It must be allowed that this meaning makes excellent sense with the context, and violates no Hebrew grammar. If, however, I have failed in giving a real interpretation of this most difficult passage, I may be excused a conjecture which is as plausible as many that have been advanced on this point. The corruptions of the old versions may be explained by the fact that the equivoke was lost so soon as readers ceased to have the Hebrew text before them, and hence the attempt to better their text.)

(13.) **And I have seen, I** have (with the emphatic I again, as a personal experience) **that there is** (*i.e.* that there really is), **a profit to wisdom above folly** (these same *elaborate* mistakes which look so like wisdom) **as the profit of the light above the darkness.** (Here profit is repeated, hence the meaning is 'as great as the profit of light above darkness.') **The wise, his eyes are in his head, but the fool** (*i.e.* the 'deceived fool'—notice the hiphil form—equivalent to the befooled, but not necessarily by others—by himself also) **in darkness walks** (hence a wise man ought to be as much better off than a fool as a sighted man is better than one blind, but experience does not confirm this conclusion); **and I know also, I** (emphatic), **that the hap** (*i.e.* the result or what occurs) **is one happening** (present here as opposed to participial noun) **to all of them** (*i.e.* both wise and fools alike—equivalent in our idiom, 'precisely the same result occurs to all').

(14, 15.) **And I said, I did, in my heart** (it was not a right thing to say, but, as we have already noticed, this formula introduces a suggestion more specious than true), **Like the hap of the befooled, so have I happened me** (*i.e.* made my own hap or result), **and why did I make myself wise then in addition?** (The Masorets accent so as to make this the main division of the verse, and consider these three last words to belong to what precedes. The LXX., on the contrary—which adds a gloss after καρδίᾳ μοῦ (διότι ἄφρων ἐκ περισσεύματος λαλεῖ), 'for the fool speaketh abundantly,' which is an ancient one, for the Syriac has it also, and varies much in its different recensions—considers them to belong to the following verse. It is difficult on this account to come to a conclusion which is correct, the LXX. or the Masorets; the more that the Masorets themselves hesitate between יתר and יותר. On the whole, one would incline to the following explanation:—take יֶתֶר in its ordi-

15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it [1]happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity.

16 For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man?* as the fool.

17 Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun *is* grievous unto me: for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

18 ¶ Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity.

20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.

21 For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it *for* his portion. This also *is* vanity and a great evil.

[1] *Heb.* happeneth to me, even to me.

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nary acceptation, 'the rest,' the meaning would thus be 'then the rest,' or 'what results is;' and suppose the pointing יִתֵּר, a conjecture subsequently strengthened by writing יותר); **and I said** (it was possibly this difficult ו, 'and,' which gave rise to the Masoretic conjecture—the LXX. take no notice of it; it is equivalent to '*why* I said') **that this** (the contracted relative with גַּם occurs only chap. i. 17, ii. 15, viii. 14, and has a tone of surprise and disappointment, giving the sense apparently that 'even *this* wisdom itself! is') **a vanity** (or an instance of evanescence or transitoriness).

(16.) **For** (an expansion of the above argument, and a corroboration of the conclusion) **there is nothing** of **remembrance to a wise** (person or thing indefinitely) **with the fool** (but the hiphil form is to be noted, as also the article, the befooled, generically, for a wise action perishes from remembrance amidst the class of fools) **to the age** (*i.e.* so far as the indefinite future is concerned) **by which present** (*i.e.* in the present of that future age or æon it will so happen that) during **the days, the going ones** (meaning, of course, the days as they are passing, or, as we say, 'in the lapse of time') **the whole** (the whole of these wise lives and works) **is forgotten** (niphal, 'becomes a forgotten thing') **and how then dies the wise? with the fool** (*i.e.* both perish together).

(17.) **Then hated I, with respect to the lives** (an emphatic אֶת, which the LXX. note by the adverbial *σὺν*, and meaning not exactly that he hated his own life, as that he felt a disgust with respect to life generally), **because an evil to me** (emphatic with עַל, giving the notion of pressing upon) **the work which I worked under the sun, because** (כִּי following in a sentence with כִּי at the commencement; this particle thus doubled I believe to be often nearly equivalent to our 'for,' 'as,') **the whole is vanity** and **vexation of spirit.**

(18.) **I hated then, I myself** (emphatic

Then besides! Why, I said in my heart, even this is an instance of evanescence, because there is no remembrance of the wise or the befooled either, in the future; because as time goes on the present will be forgotten, and fool and wise will perish alike together. I was even disgusted with respect to life itself: for an evil to *me* is the work at which I toil in this hot work-day world, since the whole is evanescent, and vexation of spirit. I for my part was disgusted with all my toil that I had moiled at it, in this work-day world, because I shall leave it to the man that succeeds me, and no one knows whether he will be wise or foolishly clever, and yet he will have power over all my toil at which I have moiled, and done so wisely in this hot work-day world: another instance this of evanescence.

So then I came round to the conclusion that I must bid farewell to any hope of satisfaction from anything I had toiled at in this work-day world; because it amounts to this: man, even when he toils wisely, prudently, and successfully, does so for some individual who has not toiled at all, and gives it to him to possess: an instance of evanescence, and very evil. For what comes to a man through

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pronoun, because again we have Koheleth's personal experience, as we should say, 'I was disgusted'), **with respect to all my toil which I** (again strongly personal, meaning so far as it was *my* toil) **had toiled at under the sun that I should leave it** (close relative qualifying the verb, and giving the idea that the grievance was that he would have to leave this work) **to a man** (*i.e.* some man as a human person) **which will be after me.**

(19.) **And who knows** (equivalent to 'nobody does know') whether **the wise** (with the article, meaning one who belongs to this class, and who will really act wisely) **or a fool?** (סכל—that is, a wisely-foolish person, one whose wisdom will prove a mistake according to the meaning of this word, see chap. ii. 3, refs.; and will use this power provided to his hand either amiss, or so as to defeat the end the wise man had in view) **and he has power** (שלט, a favourite word of Koheleth's; the exact meaning of this term may be found in Ps. cxix. 130) **in all my toil which I have toiled at, and which also I have made myself wise in** (*i.e.* spent my pains wisely in) **under the sun: besides this is vanity** (or, as we should say, 'moreover this is another instance of vanity or evanescence').

(20.) **I turned round then, I myself, to cause to despair with respect to my heart** (יאש, occurs 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, where the word is used of Saul giving up the search for David in despair) **over the toil which I toiled at under the sun.**

(21.) **For it is** (this exists as the real state of the case) **man** (*i.e.* one specimen of humanity—this is what humanity is really doing) **which he toils** (= who *is*, or may be, labouring) **with wisdom, and with knowledge, and with success** (כשרון, occurs chap. ii. 21, iv. 4, v. 11, the root occurs Est. viii. 5, chap. xi. 6, x. 10; it is a technical word—a 'successful issue' is the meaning; compare the passages. The LXX. render by *ἀνδρεία*, 'bravery,' which is not a bad rendering, since it ap-

22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

23 For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

24 ¶ *There is* nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God.

25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto,* more than I?

26 For *God* giveth to a man that *is* good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him that is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

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pears from the above that this success was but temporary), **and to a man who** has **not** (emphatic; the contracted relative joined with the negative shows that his *not* doing this is the point) **toiled** (*i.e.* taken any trouble) **in it** (emphatic, = 'in that same') **he will give it as his portion; also this is a vanity** and **an evil** which is **great.** (There is a strange sarcastic tone given by the affix in the verb following the emphatic pronoun, 'to one who has not toiled in *it* at all will he give that same.')

(22.) **For what is there** (הוה, a peculiar form; but is it not possible that this word has been chosen for the sake of the equivoke? הַוָּה, 'calamity,' 'perverseness,' Job vi. 2, Micah vii. 3, and which makes most pungent and admirable sense) **to a man in all his toil, and in vexing** (רעיון, not רעות; compare chap. i. 18) **his heart which he** himself **toils at under the sun?**

(23.) **For** (as כי is repeated, it becomes emphatic, 'for now') **all his days are causing him pain** (or painful—notice the force of the מ־) **and disappointment his anxiety,** (a pregnant sentence, denoting more than his anxiety disappoints, his anxiety is always painful and useless too) **also at night does not rest** (this clause is an additional proof that we have correctly determined the meaning of עניין; it is anxiety which causes wakefulness) even **his heart. Moreover this a vanity it is** (emphatic; so the meaning is, 'this then *is indeed* an instance of evanescence').

(24.) The conclusion of this argument now follows, viz.:—This toil is useless, and the reasoning is set out at length. **There is nothing** of a **good** (not לא here, but אין, the former would be required if the meaning were 'it is not good that') **in a man** (*i.e.* as an instance of humanity, and the whole is

all his toil and vexing his heart, which he himself toils at within this work-day world? Why, every day he spends is a trouble, and disappointment the result of his anxiety, so that even at night his heart gets no rest. So then this is an instance of evanescence itself.

There is no real good then to man in eating or drinking, or in supposing he will satisfy himself with his toil. Moreover, I must make this observation, that these things are all in the hand of the Almighty, for who could eat or even drink apart from Him? and so to man just as is right in His sight He gives wisdom and knowledge and gladness, but to the transgressor he gives the anxiety of accumulating and collecting what is to be granted to any, as also is good in the sight of God. So this is another instance of evanescence and vexation of spirit.

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equivalent to 'It is not to humanity real good that') **that he should eat and drink, and show his soul** (*i.e.* himself) **good** (repeated, 'that good') **in his toil. Moreover this** (pointed זֶה, fem. or *neuter*, which the LXX. confirm, τοῦτο) **have I seen,** even **I, now from** the **hand** (but 'the' is not emphatic at all, which would have required a different construction) of **the Deity** (on the contrary, 'the' is emphatic here, and, as will appear, the use of the article is significant) **it is** (emphatic).

(25.) **For** (repeated) **who eats or who** even **drinks** (because drinking is possible when eating is not) **apart from him?** (for we read with the LXX. חוּץ מִמֶּנּוּ, for clearly this makes good sense, and preserves the real meaning of חוּץ, which has the signification of 'without,' 'on the outside,' Gen. vi. 14, Deut. xxv. 5, refs.)

(26.) **For** (repeated again, so that this word becomes emphatic and prominent. Accordingly *four* reasons follow, comprising as it were the whole cycle of the argument) **to a man** (still generic, as a specimen of the human race) **which is good before him** (not altogether with the meaning 'a good man,' but as 'God thinks good') **He gives wisdom,** and **knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner** (*i.e.* the *erring* sinner) **he gives,** on the other hand, **anxious-travail to collect and to gather** (כָּנַס, occurs chap. ii. 8, 26, iii. 5; the meaning is 'to collect piece by piece;' see also Ps. xxxiii. 7, 1 Chron. xxii. 2), **to give it to the good** in **the sight of God** (*i.e.* as God sees fit it should be given); **so this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.**

Thus, then, the first part of the argument is completed. Man obtains nothing by his labour. It is the gift of a mysterious and inscrutable Providence which alone confers any happiness or gratification.

CHAPTER III.

TO every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time [1]to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to [2]get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

[1] *Heb.* to bear. [2] *Or*, seek.

III. At this point Koheleth commences another line of argument; he notices that all things proceed according to a fixed and settled order of providence. This truth he brings into great prominence by instancing eight-and-twenty—a fourfold seven—different times or seasons existing in human life. From this he deduces the conclusion, that as it is impossible to alter the order of Providence, the toil of man is useless to effect any real good, so far as this world is concerned. The way in which this thought is worked out is peculiar. Koheleth is both sarcastic and paradoxical in his arguments; but his sarcasms are never ill-natured and his paradoxes promote thought. He also enlivens his subject with a considerable number of plays upon words, and striking and pregnant aphorisms.

(1.) **To all** (human life, that is) is a **season** (זְמַן, this word occurs here and Neh. ii. 6, Est. xi. 27, 31, only, and the participle past of the verb Ezra x. 14, Neh. x. 34 (35) 13, 21; it will be seen by an examination of passages that this word differs from מוֹעֵד, which both Ezra and Nehemiah also use, and which is the common word in the older books for 'a *sacred* season' or 'feast.' זְמַן is a 'settled time,' 'a date.' Fuerst considers the primary idea of the root is 'to count.' It is clear that מוֹעֵד would not have suited this context; this of course so far weakens any argument for the late date of this work as derived from the use of this word), **and a time** (general, the common word) **to all** (repeated, and therefore emphatic, equal 'that is to all') **providences** (חֵפֶץ, which, however, has the signification desire as well, 'a satisfactory undertaking therefore;' Koheleth uses the word technically with a reference to the divine providences of God. The word occurs chap. iii. 1, 17, v. 4 (3), 8 (7), viii. 6, xii. 1, 10. The LXX. here render *πράγμα*, but chap. xii. *θέλημα*) **under the**

SECTION III.—*Further demonstration of the vanity of human labour from considerations touching Providence and Morals.*

TO everything is there a determined period, and a time for every providence under heaven.

(1.) A time to be born, and a time to die;
(2.) A time to plant, and a time to root up that which is planted;
(3.) A time to slay, and a time to heal;
(4.) A time to break walls, and a time to build them up;
(5.) A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
(6.) A time to cry, and a time to play;
(7.) A time to scatter stones away, and a time to gather stones again;
(8.) A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
(9.) A time to seek, and a time for loss;
(10.) A time to keep, and a time to cast away;
(11.) A time to rend, and a time to sew;
(12.) A time to be silent, and a time for speech;
(13.) A time of love, and a time of hate;
(14.) A time of war, and a time of peace.

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heavens (this meaning of חִבּץ may account for one use of this phrase here instead of the more usual 'under the sun,'—heaven being perhaps employed as we sometimes use it, for God's providence under heaven).

(2.) **A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up the planted.**

(3.) **A time for slaying, and a time for healing; a time for breaking down, and a time for building up.**

(4.) **A time for weeping, and a time for laughing; a time of wailing, and a time of dancing** (there is an alliteration here, and a slight change in construction to the hiphil in the next clause; possibly to mark the close of the first seven pairs).

(5.) **A time for scattering stones, and a time of collecting stones** (does our Lord allude to this, Mark xiii. 2?); **a time for embracing, and a time to refrain from embracing.**

(6.) **A time to seek, and a time to lose** (the Masorets consider this a Piel with the sense to destroy); **a time for keeping, and a time to cast away.**

(7.) **A time for rending, and a time for sewing** (see Gen. xxxvii. 29, 34); **a time for being silent, and a time to speak.**

(8.) **A time to love, and a time to hate a time of war, and a time of peace.** (The slight changes in the rendering correspond to changes in construction in the Hebrew, giving a pleasing variety to the whole passage. There is also an observable difference in the second seven pairs, which enumerate acts more emotional and subjective than the first.)

9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

12 I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it *is* the gift of God.

(9.) **What profit** (something 'remaining over and above the present,' in the technical meaning of this word, see ch. i. 3, refs.) **is the working** (an active participle with the article, and thus generic, working then as such) **in which** (full relative, and thus referring to the whole idea; we must render therefore 'in respect of its *being*,' which will be emphatic, as it is followed by the pronoun) **it is toil** (but we must remember that the exact meaning of this word is—see Gen. xli. 51, Isa. liii. 11—the 'anxiety,' or 'care,' the labour produces. The question then is this, Is there any profit from working in respect of its being care and pains? and the answer is, No. The LXX. render somewhat *ad sensum*: *Τίς περίσσεια τοῦ ποιοῦντος ἐν οἷς αὐτὸς μοχθεῖ*, 'What advantage of him that works in those things which *he* toils?' The Syriac, ܡܐ ܝܬܪܘܢ ܠܥܒܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܥܢܐ, 'What is the profit in the work in that he toils?' but both make the meaning clear. This question is answered in the negative, the argument being elaborated with much care).

(10.) **I have seen** (or 'observed,' as we should write, this formula introducing a matter which observation makes manifest), **with regard to the anxiety** (ענין, see chap. i. 13, refs., the meaning previously assigned of '*anxious care*,' or '*uncertainty*' generally, the word being used to signify that special form of human misery which consists in the *uncertainty* in which man lives; this emphatic את the LXX. notice and render by their adverbial *σὺν*, and to show us that the observation was made, not *of* the uncertainty, but *with respect to* it) **which has appointed** (because this is the principal idea) even **God** (the nom. follows, and is without the article, because it is God in his personal character who is here referred to. The article is used when the word occurs generically, as in the sense of 'the Deity' or 'the Almighty,'—'which it is God's appointment' then is the meaning) **to the sons of the man** (that is, the human race as children of Adam) **to be rendered uncertain therewith.**

(11.) **With respect to the whole** (again the emphatic את, and again noted by *Σύμπαντα* in the LXX., some copies reading, *σὺν πάντα ἃ*, 'the whole which;' as this preposition is repeated in the same clause, it is specially emphatic here) **he made it fair** (that is 'appropriate,' which the LXX. render *καλὰ*) **in its time** (one of these providential times or seasons above spoken of). **Moreover** (commencing another and additional argument, confirming the above), **with respect to the age** (again את repeated with the article, noticed as before by the LXX., and again by them rendered *σὺν*, meaning therefore generally, and also with regard to the indefinite future generically it is, etc.) **is set** (placed by God indeed, but the nom. is so far off that the verb is almost impersonal, or in other words all emphasis on the nominative is lost) **in their hearts from the want of which** (מבלי, occurs Job

What advantage is there to the worker by reason of his own toil?

I have observed with regard to the uncertainty which is appointed of God to the human race, to be made anxious thereby, that the whole is suitable at its proper time. Moreover, with regard to the future, that too is put into their desires, but so that Man cannot find out the working of the Almighty as *He* works it out from its beginning even to its end. I am aware that there can be no real good to any, if it be not to rejoice and to see this good in their lives. And beside, if any way humanity should eat or drink, and thus sees this good by any of his toil, it is simply God's gift. I am aware also that all which the

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iv. 11; this word joined to the full relative must mean 'but as they do not possess this knowledge of the future or this influence over the age, or course of things present and future, so as to control it,' for this is the meaning of עֹלָם, see chap. i. 4, refs.) **does not find** (emphatic, as standing before its nom.) **the man** (*i.e.* 'Humanity generally cannot find' or 'discover') **with respect to the working** (the LXX. do not render here by *σὺν*, probably because *τὸ ποίημα* is clear enough without it) **which works** ('is the work of') **the Deity from the beginning even unto** (this preposition being separated and joined with a conjunction is much more forcible than the mere affixed מִ above, because, possibly, it is desired to render emphatic this final word which is reserved to the close of the sentence) **the end** (סוֹף, which occurs in this book in the sense of a final conclusion, see ch. xii. 13, and which in the working of Divine Providence is especially mysterious).

(12.) **I know how there is nothing good** ('nothing' and 'good' are two nouns in closest apposition, and hence having the meaning 'there is no good thing') **in them** (emphatic and a distributive plural, referring to אָדָם singular) **except to rejoice and to do good** (but not in the sense of doing right, which, of course, is foreign to the train of thought, but to the obtaining of good; and as this last idea is repeated from what went before, we have the meaning '*that* good') **in their lives** (which the LXX. render by the singular 'in his life,' noticing the distributive plural. Hence then the sense of the whole passage is plain: 'I know that there can be no real good thing belonging to them, except it be that they should rejoice and do good each one in their lives,' and this is exactly true, as death so completely bounds the vision and terminates the earthly existence of every human soul that what is not obtained in this life is clearly not obtained at all. Of course the entire argument proceeds on the supposition that we are regarding the whole matter as under the sun, that is, limited to this earthly stage of existence).

(13.) **And moreover** (an additional consideration added to the above) **all the man** (*i.e.* all humanity generally, a proposition universally true of the whole of them) **when he eats** (contract relative with present tense of the verb, 'as he eats then'—and eating is here put as the general type of use and enjoyment) **and drinks** (this is not superfluous; a man can drink when he can no longer eat; he can quench the fever thirst when food is loathsome, hence drinking is the type of solace) **and sees good** (as a past tense follows a present, we have the equivalent of our imperfect; and as also the conjunction is repeated before each verb, we may render them as dependent = 'if he should eat or even drink, and so should have a sight of a good') **in all his toil** (or by means of it). **A gift** (chap. v. 19, see also 1 Kings xiii. 17, where it appears that the meaning of the word is a 'present.' LXX. *δόμα*) **of God it is** (fem., in close agreement with מַתַּת. Here again we think that there may be noticed a more

14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth [1]that which is past.

16 ¶ And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.

17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.

18 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men,

[1] *Heb.* that which is driven away.

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subjective, or active idea, when the feminine is used, than with corresponding masculines. In this way we may possibly find a grammatical explanation of the anomalous genders so common in Hebrew. In the Pentateuch הוּא is used of females, and a possible reason may be that in the earlier stages of the language there was less tendency to regard mere grammatical concords and more to follow the logic of the passage. It is worth noticing that grammatical concord as such becomes more and more developed as the language advances, hence Syriac is as strict as Greek or Latin in this respect. Whatever be the reason, however, the fact of such closer connexion is manifest by a careful collation of places).

(14.) **I know how** (and as this is a repetition of the formula in v. 12, we may add the word 'also' to show that the argument is a continuation of the above) **all which does** (or is performed by) **the Deity** (with the article) **it is** (emphatic, followed by the verb substantive, and equivalent therefore to 'it really is') that which **will be** (and so the LXX. render) **to the age** (to the indefinite æon, or future that is, or rather, for both present and past are included in this word, to the whole course of present existing things'), **to it** (in the meaning of 'over,' or 'above,' as something dominating over, which is the signification of עַל) **there is nothing to be added** (niphal, which could be added) **and from it there is nothing to be diminished** (Ex. v. 8, Job xv. 4, 8, or restrained. The relevancy of this reasoning is now evident. Human labour and anxiety is vain, for the course of providence cannot be altered by it, and if it could, the alteration would be for the worse; what follows makes this more clear), **and the Deity works that they may fear** (contract relative, with the present as above. We have also the double jod; it occurs with the single jod at chap. viii. 12, and again with double jod at chap. xii. 5. There is no doubt a difference of meaning in these cases; see a remarkable illustration of this in regard to the verb יִקַּח in Jud. xvi. 14 as compared with v. 20 in the same chapter) **from before him** (מִלְּפָנָיו, with both מ and ל, and hence emphatic, 'in *his* presence').

(15.) **What** is that **which was?** (the contract relative with the verb substantive, *i.e.* 'what is *the past?*') **the present state of things** (כְּבָר, see chap. i. 10, refs.; the word is a substantive with its ordinary technical meaning as used in this book of the 'present as it now is,' and of this he says) **it is** (emphatic) **and that which** is **to be** (appointed so to be. The LXX. render ὅσα τοῦ γίνεσθαι, literally 'things of the being,' 'or to happen') **the present state of things it was** (that is, 'this *very* same present it is;' each age being in this respect an exact reproduction of what went before it. It never was subject to human control, and never will be) **and the Deity** (as this word is repeated in the same clause, and stands

Almighty effects must be done with regard to all time, that to it nothing can be added, and that from it nothing either can be taken away, and that the Almighty acts that men may *fear* in his presence; that what has been is just the present, and whatever is to be is no other than the same present; and that the Almighty will investigate with regard to the wronged.

Yet, however, I have observed in this work-day world, that in place of justice there is impiety, and in the place even of right there is impiety also. Then said I to myself: With respect to right and wickedness, the Almighty does justice, because there is a time to every providence and dominating over every action which is done there. Then said I to myself also: By the reasonings of the human race in respect

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as a nom. before the verb, it is especially emphatic) **seeks** ('asks after,' 'inquires for,' with the object of not allowing it to pass notice, see 1 Sam. xx. 16) **with respect to a persecuted** (person or thing. He does not allow any person or thing who is wronged to pass without notice).

No doubt St. Jerome has completely hit the point of the argument when he writes, 'Since all things fade with time, and there is a time of destroying and building, weeping and laughing, for silence and speaking, and those other things which are said concerning time, why do we strive and press forward in vain, and imagine the brief labours of life to be perpetual, nor are we content, according to the Gospel, with the evil of to-day, and so take no thought for the morrow?'

(16.) **And yet** (an objection to the foregoing) **I have seen under the sun** (the limitation here introduced requires special attention) **a place of the justice** (we must not limit place to mean *locality*, but take it generally of state or position, etc., and observe also that המשפט has the article, and is therefore generic); **there** was **the wickedness** (again generic, and hence having the meaning that in place of justice, as one would expect from the proposition stated above, that the Deity has regard to the wronged, just the reverse occurred; this is again enlarged in the following), **and in the place of the right there was the wickedness** (the meaning is, that 'just in the very circumstances under which you would expect right to prevail, there you will find rampant and successful wickedness.' רשע has the meaning of that kind of 'wickedness' which goes out into bold and open transgression, see 2 Sam. xxii. 22; Ps. x. 2, 3, 4, 13).

(17.) **I said, I myself, in my heart** (which we have noticed commonly introduces a thought more specious than true), **with respect to** (את) which the LXX. note with their customary *σὺν*) **the righteous** (*i.e.* what is *made* right or *done* right; notice the hiphil form as compared with that in the above), **and with regard to the impious** also **judges the Deity, for** there is **a time to every providence, and upon** (or 'over,' which the LXX. note by *ἐπὶ*) **all the working there** (some copies of the LXX. join this to the next verse, but it is more agreeable to the gist of the passage to refer it to the preceding, as the Masoretic text does, and in this case 'there' refers back to the age or period).

(18.) **I said, I** did, **in my heart** (repeating the formula of the preceding verse, and so lending emphasis to it), **upon the speech** (this phrase occurs three times, and only in this book, viz. here, and chaps. vii. 14 and viii. 2. Notwithstanding that a similar phrase occurs Ps. cx. 4, with the meaning 'after the order,' LXX. *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν*, which is apparently sanctioned by

[1]that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all *is* vanity.

20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

21 Who knoweth the spirit [2]of man that [3]goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

22 Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better, than that a

[1] *Or*, that they might clear God and see.
[2] *Heb.* of the sons of man.
[3] *Heb.* is ascending.

New Testament exegesis, comp. Heb. v. 6, etc.; this is really not to the point, for that is על דברתי, the plural, while this is singular. According to strict grammar דברת is the construct of דברה, and should therefore mean 'reasoning of,' just as the LXX. render by *περὶ λαλιᾶς*, and this, moreover, will make good sense in every passage in which this phrase occurs) **of the sons of Adam** (*i.e.* the human race) **to the discriminating them** (hence the LXX. *διακρινεῖ αὐτούς*, considering that the root is ברר, which has the meaning 'to sift,' 'purify by sifting,' this is the only instance of the infinitive kal. Now we must take this meaning, observing that the pronoun 'them,' which is involved in the termination of the verb, is not emphatic; it is the discrimination of God which is the point, the persons on which this is exercised are subordinate. The Jewish commentators for the most part explain לברם as the third person singular preterite of ברה with the objective pronominal affix ם (the only instance, however, in which ברה has the meaning 'to choose' is 1 Sam. xvii. 8); as, however, some copies read לבררם, we can have no difficulty in referring the word to the root ברר, which makes good sense. It is also to be remarked that though ברם does not exist as a root in Hebrew, it does so in Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, and the meaning is that which is 'twisted' or 'infolded' —comp. Eze. xxvii. 24—a 'garment' worked in many colours; this would make good sense also in this place, and may possibly have been an intentional equivoke, which is not surely improbable in a sentence in which such manifest artificial alliteration occurs. The meaning then is, that) **the Deity** (discriminates men, or makes a distinction between them and the lower creatures; but in what respects? This is discussed at length) **and to see** (but rather might this form of the inf. be rendered, for which there is sufficient authority, '*to the appearance*') **that they** (contract relative, and hence the meaning is that this appearance belongs to them, and them only. In this may be found the key to the whole passage. In appearance there is no choice or discrimination, as subsequent argument proves, because they are) **a cattle** (sing. following a plural, and thus giving the meaning that each one is so) **they to them** (which Mendelssohn explains, following the LXX., 'when left to themselves,' or, as we should say, as 'far as they can tell.' With this Ewald and Ginsburg agree, who consider this latter clause an ironical '*ipsissimi*,'—'they themselves, indeed!' Thus, then, the meaning of the whole passage is, 'I said, yes, I did in my heart again, so far as human reasonings extend concerning any discrimination the Divine Providence has made of them, and as far as appearances go with them, a mere animal is each one of them, so far as they can tell.' The sentence is very sarcastic and equivocal, as the alliteration at the end

to any discrimination of them by the Divine Creator, it seems that but brutes are they at best. For the event which happens to the human race, and the event which happens to the brute-creation, is precisely the same event: the one dies just the same death as the other; and the animal life is the same in both; and the pre-eminence of man over the brute is nothing at all; for all alike are evanescent; all alike go to the same place; all alike come from the same dust; and all alike return to the same dust again. For who can tell how that the spirit of man ascends up on high, and that the spirit of the beast descends downwards to the earth? Thus I perceived that there can be no real good above that present-pleasure which man can obtain from his work; as that is what belongs

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shows. Then, again, if we take the root ברם in the sense of 'web,' as we use it for something intricate, in that case we should have the equivoke, 'concerning the web of Divine Providence so far as it appears to them.' Again, also, the Syriac renders as if לברם were לבראם, 'their Creator,' which also makes excellent sense; but this, again, may simply be a rendering of another equivoke. Then, again, there is a possible play between בהמה and the same word considered as המה with the preposition—all these equivokes assist the sense). Consistent with this is what follows:—

(19.) **For a happening of the sons of man, and a happening of the brute creation, and a happening** which is **one** (as we should say, 'precisely the same) **to them** (the threefold repetition of מקרה, 'hap,' brings this word into strong prominence. It means, of course, that which absolutely happens or results, or comes to them in the end. This is exactly the same in both cases, as the sequel shows). **As is the death of this, so** ('exactly so') **is the death of this,** and **the spirit** (or 'breath') **is one to all, and the pre-eminence** (ומותר, this noun occurs in this form only at Prov. xiv. 23, and xxi. 5, and evidently with the meaning of advantage or increase of one thing over another. The LXX. translate this as if it were ומי יתר, 'and what profit,' but this is simply to give the sarcastic turn to the sentence) **of the man** (humanity generally) **over the beasts is nothing, for the whole** (in its technical sense of the whole of life, as usual) **is a vanity** (or evanescent).

(20.) And **the whole goes to one place, the whole** (repeating this word so as to bring it into strong prominence) **was from the dust, and the whole** (again repeated, making the fourth time, and so implying universality) **returns to the dust.**

(21.) **Who knows?** (part. poel, 'who is knowing?' or 'who is there that knows?' The question does not assert the fact that there *is* no difference between man and beast; on the contrary, this clause is so ingeniously contrived as to assert the very reverse). **The spirit of the sons of men** (in its usual meaning, of the whole human race) **is the ascending** (with the article, 'the ascending thing'), **it is** (emphatic) **to the ascent** (the repetition of the same root in a different grammatical form gives prominence to this word. The human soul is, it appears, especially an 'ASCENDING thing'); **and the spirit** of the **beast** a **thing descending** (p. poel with article), **it is** (emphatic, it really is this) [**to the**] **downwards to the earth** (the ל, to, twice repeated, gives emphasis—'even to').

(22.) **And I saw** ('and thus I observed') **how there is nothing of real-good** (in the technical sense in which this word occurs so often in this book) **from which** (full relative,

man should rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

CHAPTER IV.

SO I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the [1]side of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter.

2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

3 Yea, better *is he* than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

[1] *Heb.* hand.

'more than that in which,' or 'above that he should') **he rejoices,** even **the man** does (humanity generally), **in his workings** (or what he accomplishes, pl.), **for** (or, as כִּי has occurred in the corresponding clause previously, 'as') **this is** (emphatic) **his portion** ('lot' or 'inheritance,' sing.): **for who** (כִּי again repeated, so we must render it 'and as none') **can make him come to see** (this is not exactly equivalent to 'make him see;' it is rather equivalent to 'who could enable him to see,' or 'who could show him some method how he might discover') **in what** ('of what sort' is that work which) **which will be after him** (not in respect of time, but results,—'consequences,' therefore). Thus Koheleth's reasoning is quite clear, conclusive, and connected. In *ten* particulars man and beast are alike. (1.) The result is the same to both; (2.) their death is alike; (3.) their spirit or animal life is the same; (4.) there is no pre-eminence of the one over the other; (5.) they are alike evanescent; (6.) they all go to the same place; (7.) they come from the same dust; (8.) and they all go to the same dust, and no one can tell (*i.e.* for certain, or by ordinary observations) that they differ in this; (9.) man's soul goes up, (10.) and the beast's goes down. The arrangement of the whole, it will be seen, is highly artificial.

The next stage in the argument opens with 'I turned and saw.' That is a further observation of a point in which, it may be remarked incidentally, man does differ from the beast: he is the only animal that weeps. The object here is again to show that mere earthly labour, as such, produces no satisfaction. At this point the argument becomes somewhat less sustained, dealing rather with a succession of instances.

IV. (1.) **Turned I, and I see** (the present tense following the perfect is equivalent to our imperfect, 'I was again regarding;' because this point has been touched on before, though in another form, at ii. 22, 23) **with respect to all** (אֵת כָּל, LXX. *σύμπαντα*) **the oppressions** (with the article; we must not restrict this to the oppression of one man over another, but take the word in its general sense, as from care, sickness, misfortune, etc.) **which are done** (the niphal has an objective sense, 'submitted to,' or 'are done upon others') **under the sun, and behold** (calling attention to a manifest fact) **the tear** (singular. This turn of thought, which looks upon each tear as a sorrow, a type and sample of all other sorrows, is very beautiful. Comp. Rev. vii. 17, and xxi. 4, Isa. xxv. 8, for the other side of this,—'God shall wipe away every tear,' etc.) **of the oppressings** (the same word as before,

to him: for who can bring him to see what may be the subsequent results?

BUT to return: I am observing this with regard to all those afflictions which happen in this work-day world. For see now the tear of the afflicted for which there is no comforter: and that in the hand of their afflictors there is power, and yet there is no comforter. Then I for my part pronounced happy the dead who are at this time dead, above the living in their present [qy. *pleasant!*] lives; and better off than both those who have not yet been: who have not yet had [*the pleasure!*] to see that work so evil which will be done to them in this hot work-day world.

הָעֹשְׁקִים, which the LXX., rendering *ad sensum*, express by a passive participle; but the meaning of the passage really requires the same word in both clauses: as far as Koheleth's argument here is concerned, the existence of the oppressor and oppressed are equally mysterious), **and there is nothing to them of comfort** (the LXX. render by a participle, 'comforting,' 'no one comforts them'), **and in the hand of their oppressors might** (this means, no doubt, '*that the power of the oppressors was so great*,' it was impossible to escape them; but hidden underneath is the thought—which again increases the mystery—that there is a mighty hand which could restrain these if it would), **and nothing to them of comfort** (repeated, and so emphatic).

(2.) **Then I praised, I** did (it was a personal matter, a mere opinion of Koheleth's), **with respect to the dead** (with the emphatic אֶת) **which at present** (כְּבָר, see chap. i. 10, refs., which occurs in the same technical sense as before, 'this present time or state') **are dead** (hence the whole is equivalent to 'which have finished their lives, and now are in the state of the departed'), **above the living which they are living as yet** (עֲדֶנָּה occurs here only, and only differs in pointing from עֲדֶנָה, which occurs Gen. xviii. 12 only, 'pleasure.' It will be seen that this unusual word leads to a strange equivoke, which yet helps the sense.)

(3.) **And good above both** (equals our 'better off than either') **which as yet** (עֵדֶן here only, differing again from עֵדֶן, 'delight,' 'Eden,' only in the pointing) **have not been which** (this being repeated, is equivalent to 'even those who') **do not see** the **workings** so **evil which are worked** (niphal, 'suffered') **under the sun.** It is remarkable that in both cases the sentence may be rendered, without any violence to its grammar, with each of these unusual words, translated 'pleasantness' and 'pleasure' respectively, as they ought to be thus, 'Then I praised the dead which are now in the state of the dead, above the living, in so far as they are living pleasantly (Heb. idiom, pleasantness), and better off than both to whom the pleasure is not, who is not seeing that evil work which is done under the sun.' No one can, of course, for a moment doubt that the true meaning is given by the former rendering, while this latter is only an equivoke, but it is an equivoke which helps the sense, and gives a peculiar sarcastic tone to the whole. I have endeavoured to represent this in the paraphrase by an equivoke between the words 'pleasant' and 'present,' which I am

4 ¶ Again, I considered all travail, and [1]every right work, that [2]for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

6 Better *is* an handful *with* quietness, than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.

7 ¶ Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.

9 ¶ Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to

[1] *Heb.* all rightness of work. [2] *Heb.* this is the envy of a man from his neighbour.

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almost inclined to withdraw, so feebly does it render the grave biting sarcasm of the original.

Koheleth now touches on another instance of unsatisfactoriness which besets successful toil.

(4.) **And I have seen myself** (equivalent to 'I have also observed'), **with respect to the whole toil** (in respect 'of all toil whatsoever.' Notice the twice-repeated emphatic את and σὺν), **and with respect to all success whatever** (that is, toil or pains which come to a successful issue—כשרון occurs ii. 21, here, and v. 11 (10), with the meaning 'success.' The verb occurs xi. 6, x. 10; and the only other place in which the root occurs is Est. viii. 5. It has been said in consequence to be a late word; but the force of any reasoning, derived from its occurrence, is much weakened by noticing that it is a technical term, and is used to signify the 'successful issue' which results. See chap. xi. 6, which is decisive. The LXX. render by ἀνδρείαν, 'bravery,' which is also the rendering at chap. v. 11) **of the working** (המעשה, in the usual sense of the working, or what is accomplished), **for** (or 'how,' rather) **it is** (fem. pron. emph., see chap. iii. 13) **envy** (or jealousy) **of a man** (not אדם here, but איש, 'any one,' or 'one.' German, 'man.' The meaning then is, 'one's jealousy') **over his neighbour.** (Thus the whole sentiment is, that Koheleth had observed that even when *toil*, the trouble attending labour, seemed to have a successful result, it produced more envy than pleasure, which Koheleth expresses by the pregnant words, 'It is just the envy of a man over his neighbour.') **Also this is a vanity and vexation of spirit** (*i.e.* is another instance of it).

(5.) **The fool** (*i.e.* the 'befooled,' הכסיל, doubtless by envy) **folds** (occurs iii. 5, 2 Kings iv. 16; or perhaps 'wrings') **his hands and eats his flesh.** (It has been much disputed what we are to understand by this figure; but Prov. vi. 10, xxiv. 23—where the same formula occurs to express the idleness of the sluggard—seems conclusive as to the meaning of folding his hands, as also 'flesh' in this book has a technical meaning, 'the sensuous nature'—see ch. ii. 3. We can best understand it of the self-mortification of envy: thus the connexion will be apparent both with what went before, and is to follow).

(6.) **Good** (*i.e.* a real good) **filling a hand**

I have furthermore myself observed of all toil, when it comes to any successful issue, what envy [hence] arises of a man from his fellows; and this is another instance of evanescence and vexation of spirit.

The befooled wrings his hands and eats his heart, and yet a real good is but a fistful of rest; better than both palms full of toil and vexation of spirit.

Furthermore I have observed also another instance of evanescence within this hot work-day world. There exists a solitary who has no fellow; neither son nor brother has he, yet there is no end to all his toils: and besides no satisfaction to himself in all his wealth: who never asks, 'For whom am I now toiling and depriving myself of good?' This is an instance of evanescence and uncertainty, which is evil and nothing else. Good things are companionships, and better than solitaries; for these indeed have some reward for their labour. Because if one falls, then his fellow sets him up again:

(כף, 'the open palm') **with rest, than to fill** (which repeated twice is emphatic) the **double hand** (חפנים occurs only Ex. ix. 8, Lev. xvi. 12, Prov. xxx. 4, Ezek. x. 2, 7,—the 'two hands' held together so as to hold the most they can) **of a toil** and **vexation of spirit.**

(7.) **And I turned, I myself,** and I **see** (the same formula introducing another instance of the same kind) **a vanity** (an instance of vanity) **under the sun.**

(8.) **There is one, and there is not a second** (evidently meaning that there is one who is quite alone in the world). **Moreover, son and brother there is not to him** (*i.e.* he has emphatically neither posterity nor relationship to account for this desire of accumulating which Koheleth is subsequently about to bring forward: his love of accumulation is purely *selfish*), **and there is nothing of an end** (אין, 'nothing,' is repeated three times: '*No* end to all' is therefore the meaning. This continual harping on the *nothingness* of the miser's state is an exceedingly effective piece of oratory) **to all his toil. Moreover, his eyes** (altered by the Masorets to the singular, but without much taste: 'both his eyes devour his wealth') **does not satisfy** (fem. singular; hence, as the LXX. show, the word must refer to eyes as its subject; they render 'is not filled with,' for it is a case of a distributive plural) **wealth. And for whom do I** (the ratio obliqua is dropped, and the directa used in its place; or perhaps with this meaning does this ego) **toil, and depriving my soul** (with the usual meaning, 'myself') **of good?** (abstract.) **Also this** is **a vanity and** an **anxiety** which **an evil is** (emphatic) 'indeed' (equivalent to 'an evil and nothing else,' or 'is simply an evil'; other anxieties may be beneficial, this cannot be. This is the reason why we have רע, and not רעה, the abstract, as we should have expected).

(9.) **Good** (things) are **the doubles** (*i.e.* union in the abstract), **better than the single** (again, for the same reason, with the article), **because** (literally 'which,' the full relative, and referring back to the whole idea) **there is** (exists, 'because there exists,') **a reward, a good** (*i.e.* a real good; for to love one's neighbour as one's self is one of the real good things of this world) **in the toil of them.**

(10.) **For if they fall, the one** (sing.

him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone?*

12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better *is* a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, [1]who will no more be admonished.

14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also *he that is* born in his kingdom becometh poor.

15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

16 *There is* no end of all the people, *even* of all that have been

[1] *Heb.* who knoweth not to be admonished.

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following pl., either one or other fall, that is) then **is caused to stand his fellow** (Jud. xx. 11, Ps. xlv. 7), **and woe to him** (in *this* form at this place only, perhaps because of the play upon the word אַיֵּה לוֹ, 'where is he?' an equivoke which helps the sense) **the single one which falls** (contracted relative, 'when or as he falls,') **and there is no second to make him stand.**

(11.) **Moreover** (an additional instance of the advantage of companionship, taken from the passive side, as the other was from the active side of this matter), **if they lie down, two of them, and heat to them** (*i.e.* 'there is certainly warmth for them'), **but to the single one, how can he be warmed?**

(12.) **And if they prevail over** (impersonal, *any* prevail over) **the single, the doubles will stand before him** (pl., the idea is that there are two to one), **and the cord** which is **the triplex is not in haste broken** (Jer. viii. 16; Jud. xvi. 9).

(13.) **Good is a child, poor** (מִסְכֵּן, occurs ch. iv. 13, ix. 15, 16 only; the root occurs in the sense 'profitable,' see Job xxii. 2; the idea seems to be, that kind of poverty which is economical and sparing) **and wise from** ('above,' that is; the ordinary מִן of comparison;) a **king old** (זָקֵן, the alliteration between *miscan* and *zakan* gives pungency. We have rendered this in the paraphrase by a corresponding alliteration) **and befooled, who does not know** how **to** be **warned as yet.** (The allusion here to Solomon is palpable, and this may account for the apparently redundant עוֹד, '*as yet*,' at the end of the sentence.)

(14.) **For from the house of rebels** (הַסּוּרִים is considered a contraction for הָאֲסוּרִים, 'prison;' but, to say the least, this is a violation of the critical canon, which bids us prefer the harder reading. That the derivation from סוּר, 'to turn aside,' hence 'revolters,' is contrary to the pointing, is not a valid objection, because the Masorets pointed as they did to explain a difficulty; so also the LXX., who read δεσμῶν and δεσμίων. If possible, we ought to preserve intact the unpointed text. The exact and literal meaning is, as the text stands, 'from the house of the turners-aside,' *i.e.* those conspirators and wicked men, sycophants, who will be flattering him to promote their own interest, and this was exactly Solomon's case) **he goes out to reign, for** (the second כִּי, with the meaning 'so') **also** ('moreover;' this particle, as we have seen, usually introduces an additional reason, confirming the one which went before) **in his kingdom is begotten** (נִלַּד, *noled*, a play upon יָלַד,

but sad is it to the solitary when he slips, for there is no second to set him up. Moreover, if two lie together they keep each other warm: but how can one be warm alone? And where one would fail, two will prevail; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

A Poor and Prudent young man is better than a Perverse old king, who cannot be prevailed on to listen to a warning. For from a prison-house of plotters he comes forth to reign, and beside in his kingdom is the birthplace of meanness.

I have observed of all lives whatsoever, as they are progressing in this work-day world, in regard to any successors which may arise in their places, that no result was ever reached by the [*moiling*] multitude in the past: and as to what succeeds them, they will have no

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jeled, above) **want** (רש is poverty in the sense of indigence and meanness; compare 1 Sam. xviii. 23, and Prov. xix. 1, 7, 22; as, however, רש has the form of a concrete, we must remember that it involves the idea of a poor man, hence there is a sarcastic ambiguity, heightened by alliteration. Take the LXX. and Masorets' sense, which is merely to allow the obvious play between הסורים and האסורים, and the sentiment is true, and, curiously enough, equally corresponds with the history).

The following passage is one of great difficulty, but a very careful attention to its precise wording and the equivoke it contains, may perhaps afford a solution.

(15.) **I have seen** ('observed as matter of fact'), **with respect to all the lives** (which the LXX. render *σύμπαντας τοὺς ζῶντας*), **the proceeding ones** (part. piel pl. with the article—LXX. *τοὺς περιπατοῦντας* —occurs here and Ps. civ. 3, Prov. vi. 11; 'as they are advancing' must be the meaning, and hence the observation was made with regard to the *progress* of these lives), **under the sun** (that is, in this stage of their existence; the limitation here is excessively important,) **together with the child** (with the article, generic, and giving the meaning of that which is 'begotten of them,' of course children primarily, but not exclusively; the 'heir' or 'successors' would represent the idea), **the second** (*i.e.* the *immediate* successor) **who stands in their stead** (pl., which nevertheless the LXX. render *ἀντ' αὐτοῦ*, and rightly, because it is an instance of a distributive plural, with regard to הילד).

(16.) **There is nothing** of **an end** (*i.e.* 'result,' occurs chap. iv. 8, 16) **to all the people** (with the article, *τῷ παντὶ λαῷ*, LXX. —and in this book it appears as a collective for the human race—see chap. xii. 9), **to all** (repeated, hence with the meaning, 'that is to all those') **that** (full relative) **were before them** (but 'before' in the sense of in their 'presence,' not in the sense of 'before their time'), **moreover** (introducing an additional reason), **the succeeding ones**—(see 2 Chron. ix. 29, xii. 15, which will give the exact meaning) **not** (rather emphatic from its position, 'not at all') **will they** (*i.e.* the people before them) **rejoice in it** ('it' is a singular following a plural, and hence a distributive, 'any successor') **for also this** is **a vanity** (an instance of evanescence) **and vexing** (not 'vexation,' because this comes from within) **of spirit.** Thus the sense is clear; it is the conclusion of the argument. Koheleth's observation has regard to the progress of lives in relation to anything that may or is to be produced by them in the way of heritage—or, in other words, he asks how far

before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER V.

KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* [1]thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words.

4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.

[1] *Or*, word.

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the present state of things can be explained on the theory that it is a working for posterity, and he shows that this is not an explanation, for there is no result obtained by the collective people in the present, because each age is the same morally as that which went before it; while, of course, with regard to what is to succeed, the present generation cannot rejoice in that, because they will be all dead, and as the argument is limited to what takes place under the sun, so all so-called progress is but an instance of evanescence. The idea, if not that contained in the observation of one who selfishly observed, when requested to care for posterity, 'that as posterity had done nothing for him, he did not see why he should do anything for posterity,' rests on the same facts.

The sentence also, it appears, contains a remarkable equivoke. לבל העם לבל sounds very like לבל העמל בל, and this division of the words will make such good and pungent sense that we can hardly imagine that the equivoke was unintentional. The equivoke is sought to be rendered in the paraphrase by the addition of the words enclosed in the brackets.

At this point we come to another division in the book. Certain practical exhortations follow, deduced from the previous arguments, concerning human conduct, under the circumstances above set forth.

V. (1.) **Keep thy feet** (the Masorets have altered this to the singular, but without sufficient reason; yet the LXX. support the Kri) **as when** (occurs chap. v. 3 (4), viii. 7; 'as though' is the meaning here) **thou walkest** (taking up the word from the last clause above) **towards the house of the Deity** (the LXX. render, of course correctly as to sense by the double article, τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Θεοῦ—'Thou art walking to the temple of a Divine Providence' is the idea), **and drawing near to hear** (evidently 'in order to hear'; hence the LXX. render ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀκούειν; some, however, with the A. V., take this as an imperative, but the sense is better preserved by rendering as the LXX. do), **more than giving of the befooled ones** (for we must not lose sight of the hiphil form: they are deceived either by themselves or others) **a sacrifice.** (The curious rendering of the LXX. by no means shows that they did not understand the meaning, or even would have altered the present pointing; ὑπὲρ

[*earthly*] pleasure in that. Another instance of evanescence and vexing of spirit.

SECTION IV.—*Practical aphorisms grounded on the foregoing.*

GUARD thou thy steps as one who art walking to the House of the Divinity, and approach rather to hearken than to give, as the fools do, a sacrifice; who do not know when evil is being done. Do not be hasty with thy lips, nor in thought hurry forth a word against the Almighty, for that Almighty is in the heavens, and thou art upon the earth: on this account let thy words be sparing. Because just as there comes dreaming through a multitude of anxieties, so there comes the voice of a befooled through a multitude of reasonings.

(2.) Shouldst thou have vowed specially to God, do not be slow to pay it; because there is no providence with the befooled ones:

δόμα τῶν ἀφρόνων θυσία σου fulfils their conditions of rendering, which is, if possible, to preserve both the sense and the order, 'above the gift of fools is thy sacrifice'). **For** they are **not those instructed to the doing of** (so the LXX., τοῦ ποιῆσαι) **evil.** The sentence is purposely ambiguous and equivocal; it is not clear at first sight whether the fools are those who do evil, or whether it be the doing of evil generally which is the point, but the following will seem to give a fair explanation of this difficult passage. The advice given after the considerations above, is to walk reverently, and to listen to what God's oracle will say, rather than do as fools do,—offer a sacrifice to avert evil, which they do not after all know to be such, and which, if it implies dissatisfaction with these divine providential arrangements, is a foolish, if not sinful, sacrifice. This is further set forth in the following verses.

(2, 3.) **Do not hasten** (the hastiness of vexation, see Job iv. 5, xxiii. 15, Ps. vi. 10) **upon thy mouth** (the preposition is by no means redundant), **and thy heart do not hurry** (the usual word denoting the hurry of want of time. The meaning then is, do not speak, no, do not even think, hastily) **to cause to send out a word** (with the usual meaning of 'a reason to be acted on') **before the Deity, because the Deity** (as this is a repetition, the word becomes emphatic, 'that Deity') **in the heavens and thou** (emphatic) **on the earth, therefore be thy words a few** (*i.e.* diminished rather than increased, hence the following). **For comes the dream in the multitude of anxiety, and a voice of a befooled** one (for it is without the article) **in the multitude of words** (or 'reasons,' as above). The argument now passes over from rash speeches to rash vows. A vow is a favourite resource with the foolish for obtaining the accomplishment of their wishes: they think to bribe Providence with gifts and offerings.

(4.) **When thou hast vowed a vow** ('If by any means thou hast done this,' for considerable emphasis is given by the repetition of 'vow,' according to the well-known Hebrew idiom) **to God, do not defer to pay it** (the alacrity with which men vow is commonly in strong contrast with the tardiness with which they pay), **because there is nothing** of **providence** (חֵפֶץ, with its usual technical meaning, and also equivocal, in the sense of

5 Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but fear thou God.

8 ¶ If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not [1]at the matter: for *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth; and *there be* higher than they.

9 ¶ Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field.

[1] *Heb.* at the will, or purpose.

'pleasure') **in befooled ones: with respect to what thou hast vowed, pay** (the LXX. render σὺ οὖν 'thou then,' but the emphasis given by את אשר may easily account for this).

(5.) **A good is it that thou shouldst not vow** (the sentence is ambiguous, but the equivoke is 'thou hadst better *not* vow'), **than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.**

(6.) **Do not give with respect to thy mouth** (the את is not redundant, 'do not appoint,' which is the meaning of תתן), **to cause to make to sin with respect to thy flesh** (the meaning then must be, 'do not so arrange matters as to cause thy mouth to make thy flesh sin,' by, that is, preferring the ease, pleasure, of the flesh or the like, to the sacrifice caused by a redemption of the vow), **and do not say in the presence of the angel** (with the article; had this been noticed as it ought, less difficulty would have been felt in the interpretation of this passage; the angel is the messenger of Providence who comes to require the vow, and whom, of course, with or without sufficient reason, the person bound by the vow expects) **that** (כי) **an error it is**: (see Lev. iv. 2, 22, 27, and Numb. xv. 24, 25, 29; when too this passage is compared with Lev. iv. 2, we can have no doubt that לפני מאת here is the equivalent of לפני יי there) **why** (LXX. ἵνα μὴ, 'so that not'), **should be angry** (Gen. xl. 2, Deut. i. 24) **the Deity over thy voice** (Ginsburg, excellently, 'with thy prattle'), **and destroy** (as this word is used to signify the 'giving a pledge,' this peculiar signification conveys the idea, 'destroy by exacting a pledge,' 'make thee bankrupt by insisting upon payment') **with respect to the work of your hands?**

(7.) **For in a multitude of dreams** ('conjectures' probably) **and vanities and reasonings, the much** (*i.e.* these reasonings are increased); **for** (כי is repeated, and this repetition makes it emphatic—'so indeed') **with respect to the Deity fear.** The probable meaning is, 'fear God under all circumstances: vanity and conjectures only increase the reasons for so doing,'—thus is revealed the real conclusion of the whole treatise.

Koheleth now takes up a subject ineffectually discussed before, and solves it with this principle just enunciated: Fear God.

(8.) **If oppression of the poor** (see chap. iv. 1, 3, etc.), **and wresting of judgment and right, thou seest in a province** (במדינה, this has been considered a late word, and a

just what thou hast vowed pay. For it is better that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst be vowing and not pay. Do not allow thy mouth to cause thy body to sin; and say not in the presence of God's messenger, 'It was but an inadvertence:' why should the Almighty be angry with your prattle, and put an arrest on the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and vanities even so reasons are multiplied that GOD is to be feared.

(3.) If violent oppression of the poor, and wresting of justice and right, should be observed by you in a jurisdiction, do not be surprised at the providence; for the lofty are watched by one loftier still, and these lofty ones are—subjects.

And besides,

(i.) The produce of the earth is all in all: a king is a subject to the field.

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sign, moreover, that the writer lived in the country and not in the city, as he says, chap. i. 12; but though it occurs in the later Hebrew (1 Kings xx. 14 is the first instance) it is quite regularly formed, and is clearly in place here), **do not marvel** (Ps. xlviii. 6, Jer. iv. 9, to 'be astonished,' 'struck with astonishment') **over the providence** (הַחֵפֶץ) with the article; the LXX. render τῷ πράγματι in this instance, the word, however, occurs in the technical meaning it has all through the book, see chap. iii. 1, v. 4 (3)); **for high from above the high** (which the LXX. render word for word, ὑψηλὸς ἐπάνω ὑψηλοῦ) **keeps and high ones above them** (the sentence is enigmatic, perhaps proverbial, though the meaning is clear. Is it possible that a play was intended between מַעַל and מַעַל, Lev. v. 15, a 'transgression,' גבה being taken in the meaning of swelling up, thus—'Increasing transgression is increasing regard?' In the same way the מ at the end of גבהים would unite with the word following in utterance, and so help the equivoke).

(9.) **And the profit** (as this is joined by a conjunction with the former, we must look upon it as a further argument in the same chain of reasoning; the meaning will then be 'and besides the produce') **of earth** (not *the* earth, the article is wanting) **in all** (the LXX. render this by ἐπὶ with a dative, hence they understood the preposition here to mean 'for all,' which our version follows) **it is** (fem., in close apposition therefore with the noun, but this noun must be יִתְרוֹן, which is fem., and the meaning is that it exists subjectively, or is always there playing its part) **a king** (again, not *the* king: any king, therefore, however great,—Solomon himself, or any other) **to a field** (again, not *the* field, equivalent to some field; the LXX. render by the simple genitive) **is served** (niphal; this occurs only twice in the past tense, here and at Ezek. xxxvi. 9, both in the sense of tilling; and the niphal future twice, at Deut. xxi. 4 and Ezek. xxxvi. 34, again with the same meaning—no doubt עבד is used with the signification 'to serve generally' in a vast number of places. It must be observed, however, that a niphal is not exactly the same as a passive, but has an objective signification, so that it is often nearer in meaning to the Greek middle voice than our passive. Bearing this in mind, we can have no further doubt over this passage as to its principal scope,—'the king is served of,' or 'a subject to the field.' The idea is that the very highest are really in a state of abject dependence—a single day's starvation would have been sufficient

10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity.

11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

13 There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing in his hand.

15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so

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to have brought to the dust Solomon or Nebuchadnezzar. The other possible rendering, that '*the king is served by the field*,' is only the other side of the same truth, and the sentence is equivocal, being ingeniously constructed so as to read either way).

(10.) **Loving silver** (the Masorets point as a participle, but however correct this may be, the participial notion is in Ecclesiastes apparently not so prominent, as it is when the poel is used written full) **not satisfies** (*i.e.* as the nom. follows, 'shall not be satisfied with') **silver** (*silver* is doubled here, and used of course in the sense of money—the meaning being that 'a lover of money no *money* ever satisfies'), **and who loving in a multitude** (*i.e.* setting his desires in a multitude of goods, or anything else) **not** (but the LXX. in place of לֹא possibly read לוֹ, 'to him,' and this makes far better and more pungent sense—'*to him*' emphatic will then be the meaning) **a revenue** (Num. xviii. 30, Deut. xxxiii. 14, Prov. iii. 14, xviii. 20; or, still better, for the word is derived from the root בּוֹא, 'to come,' 'an income.' Thus it is seen that the two clauses are aimed respectively against niggardliness and extravagance. The miser and the spendthrift both never have enough); **also this is vanity** (another instance of the transitory and evanescent, as indeed it is, because these riches look satisfactory and are not).

(11.) **In the multitudes of the good** (an abstract, with the article, and hence the meaning is 'In the very increase of the property itself, and as it increases,' this being the meaning of the plural, which is distributive) **multiply the eatings of it** (or, for the ה may be considered paragogic, and so making, as it were, an abstract of the poel participle, 'consumers'), **and what is the success** (כִּשָּׁרוֹן, see ii. 21, refs.) **to the owners of it** (*i.e.* to ownership), **except seeing** (רְאִית, this the Masorets alter to רְאוֹת, but unnecessarily, for there is a slight difference in the sense here, which will account for the unusual grammatical form; a causative or hiphil notion is implied by it; hence the LXX. ἀρχὴ τοῦ ὁρᾶν, 'the priority to see,') **his eyes?** (*i.e.* each one with his eyes, sing. following plural).

(12.) **Sweet** (but the participial form of the noun must not be overlooked, nor the feminine termination, equivalent to a 'sweetness,') **is the sleep of the slave** ('of the toiler,' with the article), **if a little, or if the**

(ii.) A lover of money no money ever satisfied; and who that loved profusion ever had sufficient income? Another instance of the evanescent.

(iii.) As property increases, so increases consumption too; and what success then has ownership, but just the right of beholding it?

(iv.) How sweet is the sleep of the slave, if a little, or if much he eats: but a sufficiency to one who is enriched—does not cause rest to him so that he sleeps.

(v.) There is this evil infirmity which I have observed in this work-day world: Riches kept by an owner to his own injury; for the wealth itself perishes in an uncertainty which is distressing: so that when he begets an heir, he has in his hand just nothing at all. For naked as when he came forth from the womb of his mother does he go out of the world again; and nothing whatever does he take

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much he eats (there is a peculiar force in contrasting '*the* much,' הרבה, with the article, with מעט without it; even if he should eat to *the much* (*i.e.* as large a quantity as he can) it will do him no harm: no nightmare will trouble him who has earned his hearty meal by his hard work), **but the satisfaction** (as contrasted with הרבה) **to the enriched it is not that which is causing rest** (hiphil participle) **to him** (emphatic) **to sleep** (an equivoke here is to be found in השבע and לעשיר, remembering that שבע, 'seven,' is used so commonly for 'completeness,' and עשר, 'ten,' as 'rich' and 'overflowing;' seven with ten has a peculiar meaning in the symbolism of numbers).

(13.) **There is an evil** (abstract, a particular kind of evil), **a sickness** (another abstract) **I have seen under the sun—wealth keeping to** (*i.e.* being kept by) **its possessors to their hurt.**

(14.) **And perishes, that riches, that same** (as we should say, 'those very same riches') **in an uncertainty** (בענין, another instance of this word; we see that in this case also (see chap. i. 13, refs.), the meaning 'anxious uncertainty' exactly suits the context), which is **an evil** (this anxious care, instead of doing any good, is but a simple mischief), **and he is caused to beget a son** (to whom, of course, he would have wished to bequeath his wealth), and there is **nothing in his hand at all** (which the LXX. render by a double negative, and hence we must render 'and has in his hand even nothing at all').

(15.) **And as he came out from the womb of his mother naked** (which is reserved to the end of the clause, making it emphatic; it is moreover written full, so that a slight additional emphasis is given by this to the '*state* of nakedness' existing), **he returns to go back** (somewhat stronger than goes back—he comes to this state through intermediate stages) just **as he came** ('as he was at the first, so now is he at the last'), **and nothing at all does he not lift up** (Gen. vii. 17, 'bear' as a burden) **in his toil** (as we say, '*have* for his *pains*,' observing the meaning of עמל, not the labour but the anxiety which causes, or results from, the labour) **which he takes in his hand.**

(16.) **And, moreover, this same evil sickness, all over against** (כל עמת occurs as two words here only; לעמת is the ordi-

shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?

17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and *he hath* much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

18 ¶ Behold *that* which I have seen: [1]*it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun [2]all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it *is* his portion.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this *is* the gift of God.

20 [3]For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.

[1] *Heb.* there is a good which is comely, etc.
[2] *Heb.* the number of the days.
[3] *Or*, though *he give* not much, *yet* he remembereth, etc.

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nary form, it has the meaning of 'against,' over against,' see Ex. xxv. 27, 2 Sam. xvi. 13; it has been proposed to read כלעמת, in which case the meaning will be as in the above—'precisely as,' LXX. ὥσπερ γὰρ, but this is to a certain extent to cut the knot rather than untie it. Now עמת occurs separately here only, and if עמת really exists, it is a noun feminine in regimen; now the meaning of עם, which is presented both in 'people' and in the prep. '*with*,' gives evidently something 'collected' or 'gathered,' hence עמה would mean a 'collection' or 'instance,' and עמת 'collection' or 'instance of,' and then the exact meaning of כל ע״ will be 'every instance of his going'), **which he comes** (close relative, the reason of which is now sufficiently evident, meaning, 'just as he comes;' he simply goes round in a circle without accomplishing anything, or returns back on his own track in every instance) **so** (emphatic, standing apart from its noun, equal 'just so') **does he go, and what profit to him who has toiled** (close relative again, 'in that he has toiled') **to the wind?** (which, see chap. i. 6, returns back again as it did before. 'To' is here not exactly the same as 'like to,' but very near it; but perhaps also because his toil or care is to his spirit, as it has no effect otherwise.)

(17.) **Moreover, all his days in darkness** (for, of course, all this time he has never any idea which way he was really going, or what he is doing) **he eats** (or consumes), and **disappointment is the much** (or is multiplied), **and his sickness and wrath** (קצף is that kind of wrath which arises from anger with a person on account of something wrong. This miserable life is summed up, it appears, in four particulars—(1.) All his days he eats in darkness; (2.) the vexation of disappointment consumes him; (3.) he is sick, or rather, in this general sense, he is afflicted; (4.) he is angry, for those mistakes and disappointments.)

(18.) **Behold** (for this introduces the manifest result of his observation) **that which I have seen, even I myself** (the result therefore of his own personal experience), **a real good; which also** (the full relative here has this meaning, because it is repeated) **is suitable to the eating** (*i.e.* active enjoyment), **to the drinking** (which is passive), **and to the seeing of goodness** (the *lamed* is repeated before each full infinitive, and the abstract טובה follows, which therefore gives the meaning that what he had observed was, 'that it was proper that one should eat, or one should drink, or should see good

from his care, which he can hold in his hand. Moreover, in this is discovered that evil infirmity, that precisely as he began, so does he leave off; and what possible advantage can there be, that he toiled for the wind? Moreover, all his days he consumes in darkness: his disappointment is very great indeed: he has sickness and is sorry.

Manifest, then, is that real good which I have observed, viz., that it is proper to eat, and to drink, and so to see good in all one's toil which one may toil in this hot work-day world, as the tale of one's daily life. For this is what God gives, and this is one's *own* possession. And beside, should the Almighty appoint to any individuals of the human race, riches, possessions, and the power to enjoy them, and so to make use of their possessions, and rejoice in their toil—this is simply a Divine appointment. For the memory of the days of the past life is not of much importance; but the Almighty rather exercises men in their present emotions.

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in,' etc., *i.e.* any or all of these); **and** (repeated, meaning '*and also*') **in all his toil which** (contracted relative) **he toils** over (toil is thus made very emphatic, the meaning is, 'for which one so earnestly or unceasingly toils,' for observe also, as no nominative is expressed, the verb is impersonal) **under the sun the number** (the root מִסְפָּר has the meaning to count or enumerate, hence the idea 'as one is counting one's days') **of the days of his life which gives to him** (emphatic) **the Deity** (nom. following verb, with the usual shade of meaning), **because it is his portion** (*i.e.* what belongs to him, but in the future he has no portion, *that* no man has any right over).

(19.) **Moreover, all the man** (*i.e.* every one of the human race considered collectively and in the abstract) **which gives to him** (equivalent to one to whom) **God** (gives or appoints) **wealth and riches, and it is caused him to have power in order to eat** (which we have seen is used as the highest type of enjoyment in the active sense) **of it, and to take his portion** (for a man may possess without being able to eat or enjoy at all, hence the necessity for this clause in the course of the argument; נשׂא has the meaning to 'lift up,' 'carry,' or 'bear'), **and to rejoice in his toil** (which—considering the exact meaning assigned in this book to עָמַל, the 'care' one takes in one's labour—to rejoice in is to see it come to a successful end); **this same** (the Masorets put here a strong disjunctive accent) **a gift of God it is.**

(20.) **For not the much he remembers** (but as no nominative precedes or follows, the verb is impersonal) **the days of his life,** and **for** (the second כִּי introducing a reason in addition to and confirmatory of the first) **the Deity answers** (this is the only place in which the participle hiphil occurs; in one other place the participle pual—Isa. liii. 4, which differs only from the hiphil in its pointing, occurs evidently in the sense of 'afflicted,' which the LXX. render by ἐν κακώσει, 'in affliction.' The future hiphil is used at 1 Kings viii. 35 and 2 Chron. vi. 26, parallels, and is translated 'thou dost afflict them.' On the whole, however, the meaning, as pointed out by Zökler, and which the LXX. confirm, seems to be, 'hears them by vouchsafing;' and as this answer is painful or joyful, as the case may be, and more usually the former, 'exercises' would be a suitable rendering) **in the joy of** (or by means of the joy, בְּ, of the

CHAPTER VI.

THERE is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men:

2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease.

3 ¶ If a man beget an hundred *children*, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also *that* he have no burial; I say, *that* an untimely birth *is* better than he.

4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known *any thing:* this hath more rest than the other.

6 ¶ Yea, though he live a thousand years twice *told*, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?

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instrument; it is an abstract in regimen, 'in the joyousness' or 'rejoicings of') **his heart.** Thus, then, the two reasons given stand related thus: Present gratification is the lot of humanity, because the past is not much remembered. The *chief* remembrance —for this is the meaning of הרבה—is not in the past. The deepest sorrows fade away quickly into forgetfulness; and so also the brightest joys. They have, no doubt, some influence by recollection, but not *much.* And thus the Deity, or God regarded as the supreme providential ruler, exercises us. He responds to our anxieties, afflicts us, or chastens us, or causes us pleasure by means of joys given or taken away, as the case may be. Again, these are spoken of as joys of our *hearts*, or of our inward desires and consciousness, which is the meaning of 'heart' in this book; our *emotional nature*, as the idea would stand expressed in the nomenclature of modern philosophy.

VI. (1.) **There is** (exists) **an evil which I have seen under the sun, and common** (literally 'much') **it is** (fem. emp.) **over the man** (*i.e.* mankind in general).

(2.) **A man** (איש, not אדם, for it is equivalent to our 'one' indefinitely), **which gives to him** (emphatic) **the Deity** (one to whom the Deity gives, that is) **riches, and possessions** (chap. v. 19), **and honour, and he is not lacking to his soul of all which he desires** (the expression is peculiar, and is designed to bring into prominence the fact that to this person nothing at all is lacking; as we say, 'he wants for nothing') **and not causes to him power,** does **the Deity to eat** (in the usual sense of 'enjoy' or 'use') **from it, for a man** (again איש, 'one'), **a stranger, eats it** (equivalent to 'some stranger or another really enjoys it'). **This is vanity** and **sickness,** which is an **evil,** (indeed) **it is.**

(3.) **If is caused to beget a man** (again איש, 'should one beget') **a hundred** (children is to be supplied, but not prominently; begetting is used in its widest sense), **and years many** (plural, equivalent to 'years,

THERE is another evil which I have observed in this work-day world, and a common one is it upon mankind: one who has appointed to him by the Almighty riches, possessions, and honour, and there is nothing lacking to him which he could possibly desire; and yet the Almighty Himself does not allow him to have any enjoyment of it; but some stranger or other enjoys it. This is an instance of evanescence, and an infirmity which is indeed an evil. Suppose one were to beget a hundred children, and he should have many years, yes, many indeed may be the days of his years, and his soul not satisfied with good, and he have no burial,—I should say, that better off than such an one is an abortion. For in evanescence it begins, and in darkness departs, and its name in that darkness is concealed; IT has not seen light; HE has not known rest; the one is no better than the other. Suppose he had even lived a thousand years twice over, and seen no good in them, does he not arrive at altogether the same result as abortion?

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and many of them') **should live, and many** (singular) **which they are the days of his years** ('and the days of his years should be ever so many,' his life being expressed both in days and years to give strong prominence to the fact of its duration), **and his soul not satisfied from out of the good** (the abstract with the article, hence equivalent to our 'good,' standing alone), **and moreover burial** (the abstract of the past participle, used, of course, as the place of burial—see Gen. xxxv. 20, xlvii. 30, but with a shade of difference from קבר—comp. Gen. xlvii. 30 with Gen. l. 5, for here, too, we notice that קבורה is written full) **is not to be to him** (emph. To have no burial, no one to lament him or erect a tomb over him—to be worse off than Jehoiakim, Jer. xxii. 19, who had the burial of an ass—is such a terrible failure to a man who had possessed a hundred children, of whom some at least might have shown him this last honour, that it may well be cited as an instance of failure of human felicity), **I say a good better than his** (emphatic) **is the abortion** (*i.e.* that abortion is a better lot).

(4, 5.) **For in vanity he comes, and in darkness he goes, and in darkness** (repeated, equivalent, therefore, to 'in that darkness') **his name is covered; moreover the sun not seen** (which is the lot of the abortion), and **not knowing rest** (the lot of the person here spoken of), **to this** there is no **more** than **that.** The Masorets, however, by their accentuation, show that they understood the verse somewhat differently. They render, 'a sun he does not see and does not know; the rest of this is more than that;' but this rendering is obscure and clumsy, and makes the words 'does not know' superfluous, besides interrupting the argument. The LXX. render verbatim: *καίγε ἥλιον οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω ἀναπαύσεις τούτῳ ὑπὲρ τοῦτον*, which is clear enough with the Hebrew before us, but is quite unintelligible without it, hence the text has been attempted to be amended in various ways (see Stier and Theile's *Polyglot*).

(6.) **And if** (this particle occurs Est. vii. 4 only, equivalent to וְאִם לֹא, but common

7 All the labour of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the [1]appetite is not filled.

8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

9 Better *is* the sight of the eyes [2]than the wandering of the desire: this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it *is* man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

11 ¶ Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what *is* man the better?

12 For who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life, [3]all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

[1] *Heb.* soul. [2] *Heb.* walking of the soul.
[3] *Heb.* the number of the days of the life of his vanity.

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in later Hebrew and Chaldee. It is one of those words from which many critics infer a late date to this book; but is it not used for the sake of the alliteration with הלא below?) **he lived a thousand years twice told, and goodness not seen** (as there is no nominative expressed, these verbs are in the nature of impersonals, and express the fact generally), **is it not to a place** which **is the same** (lit. 'one') **the whole** (*i.e.* the totality of such persons) **is going?**

(7.) **Every toil** of **the man** (*i.e.* humanity) **is to his mouth** (remembering the meaning of עמל, the sense is clear; the anxiety of men is directed to their mouths, to satisfy physical or moral hunger), **and besides the soul** (*i.e.* the self, the ego, as metaphysicians write) **is not filled** (*i.e.* satisfied, or fills itself).

(8.) **For what is profiting to the wise beyond the befooled? what** (repeated, 'even what') **to the poor** (but 'poor' in the sense of oppressed or unfortunate) **made to know to walk in the presence of the living ones?** We must notice, in explaining this very obscure passage, that החיים, being with the article, must be looked upon as denoting lives generally; moreover נגד has the meaning of 'in the presence of,' 'amongst,' 'in the midst of.' Thus the advantage, or that which is really profitable to the wise, is to know how to walk, proceed, or act; to know which way to go in the presence of the living; in what way, therefore, to direct himself through life and amongst its pleasures and difficulties, so as to make no mistakes as the befooled does. Thus we obtain a connected sense. The anxiety is for enjoyment, but satisfaction is impossible. What, then, is the advantage or profit of wisdom, in the sense of knowing what is best to do under a given set of circumstances? and what advantage gives it over the man who is dissatisfied equally, but does *not* know this? The answer is, Just the same as to a man in distress, who can manage to live. Existence itself is the struggle for life; but the wise rise to the top, and the fools sink.

(9.) **Good is the seeing of the eyes above the walking the soul** (but the participle מראה is singular, and eyes are plural, hence 'better is a sight with the eye than,' etc. But may not there be this equivoke? מהלך might be a participle also, and then the

All the toil of humanity is for the gratification of appetite, and yet the desires are never satisfied. What profit then is there to the wise above the befooled? simply that which it is to a man in distress to maintain himself in the presence of the living. Good is a sight with one's eyes above a longing for one knows not what: another instance this of evanescence and vexation of spirit.

What then is that which will be? The present state of things, called by its true name, and known what it really is—Old Adam, unable to obtain a decision in a cause with a Power superior to himself. For there are numberless reasons, and they only increase the demonstration of evanescence, and that there could be no profit to humanity. For no one can tell what *is* a real good to mankind in any life: that life being a number of evanescent days, which he spends as a shadow, and of which no one can tell to any man what shall result to him—in this hot work-day world.

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whole would read thus, 'A real good, the seeing of the eye, the wandering of the soul'). **Moreover, this is vanity and vexation of spirit** (this clause being in this case the answer to the above. So curt and enigmatical a sentence was no doubt in some way intended to be equivocal).

(10.) **What is that which will be? The present** (comp. ch. i. 10, refs.) **is called its name** (to be called by its name is of course equivalent to our 'accurately described'), **and it is known** (subjectively) **what it is** (emph.), **even man** (but here without the article, an 'instance' then of 'an Adam' or human person), **and not able to decide with the mightier than he** (emph., לִדִין, Ps. l. 4, Isa. iii. 13; this the A. V. renders rightly 'to contend with,' because דִּין has the meaning of 'judge' in the sense of 'decide in a court of justice.' שֶׁהַתְּקִיף occurs Job xiv. 20, xvi. 24, and chap. iv. 12, and as an adj. in the hiphil form here only. The Masorets notice that the ה is superfluous; but this could only have been because they did not see, as the LXX. did (who add the article *τοῦ lσχυροῦ*, 'the strong'), that it means 'the strong one' generically; 'what is stronger,' as we say, or, noticing the hiphil form, 'what is *made* stronger,' and which is clearly man's destiny, decided by an overruling providence which he cannot escape).

(11.) **For there exist words** (reasonings, in the technical use of the word in this book) **the much** (*i.e.* to the full) **multiplying vanity, what is the profiting to humanity?** The meaning seems to be that there could be adduced a still greater number of reasons, all of which would show that human life was evanescent; but what is the profit, or use, of stating them to humanity, or bringing them forward? and as יותר naturally refers to דברים, the nearest nominative, it must be taken as a distributive singular; so that this interpretation is the simplest the grammar of the passage admits.

(12.) **For** (another additional reason) **who knows what is a good to man in his lives** (אדם, followed by plural, 'lives,' in *any* life, therefore), **the number of the days of his life** (*i.e.* as he passes the days of that life), **his vanity** (that evanescent life of his), **and he makes them as a shadow** (the LXX. render *ἐν σκιᾷ*, but this may be *ad*

CHAPTER VII.

A GOOD name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 ¶ *It is* better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart.

3 [1]Sorrow *is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

6 For as the [2]crackling of thorns under a pot, so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

7 ¶ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.

[1] *Or*, anger. [2] *Heb.* sound.

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sensum only, not because they read differently) **which** (full relative, because the whole idea is referred to, it may be best rendered 'because') **who** (repeated, and so giving emphasis) **tells to man what shall be after him** (*i.e.* what shall succeed him) **under the sun.** The limitation is necessary, and especially here, as this passage closes the argument thus far. What is to follow is in the nature of detached and paradoxical aphorisms, illustrating these truths: they are some of these many arguments demonstrating human evanescence and transitoriness, but stated less formally than heretofore.

VII. (1.) **Good is a name, above ointment good** (there is an alliteration here which gives great pungency to the sentence. The Masorets commence this paragraph with a large letter. The Jews have discovered many mysteries in these letters, but here, perhaps, it is sufficient reason to allege that a new division of the subject begins); **and the day** (but without the article) **of the death above the day of his birth** (equivalent to one's birth, for there is no nominative expressed. Some have remarked that the second clause being connected by a conjunction with the first, is to be looked upon as containing a consequence of the fact stated in the first; which is quite true if not pressed too far. Possibly the idea might be presented thus—

> All the ointment's costly fame
> Is not so good as a good name,
> And thus it comes that dead saints die
> In odour of sweet sanctity).

(2.) **Good is it to go to the house of mourning, more than to go to the house of feasting, in which** (full relative) **is** (emphatic) **the end of all the man** (the end of all humanity generally: every real biography is a tragedy and ends with a death), **and the living** one **will give it to his heart.**

(3.) **Good is vexation** (the vexation of disappointment—see chap. i. 18, refs.) **above laughter; for in the evil** (concrete, and therefore an evil or distortion) **of the faces** (pl., but פָּנִים is so generally, as the face

SECTION IV. *continued.—Providential Paradoxes leading up to the conclusion, Fear God.*

(1.) GOOD is a name, (2.) good more than spikenard's fame; and a deathday is better than one's birthday.

(3.) Good is it to go to the house of mourning, rather than to go to the house of feasting; because therein is the end of every human thing, and the living should lay it to his heart.

(4.) Good is disappointment above laughter; for by spoiling the features the heart is improved. That heart of the wise which is in the house of the mourning, when the heart of the befooled is in the house of mirth.

(5.) Good is it to hear the rebuke of the wise, more than that any should hear the song of the befooled.

For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the cackling of the befooled—and besides, it is evanescent.

Yet affliction makes false a wise man's hope, and destroys the heart of his purpose.

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is double) **is bettered** (a *pe. jud* verb, with double *jud*) the **heart.** I think the equivoke here is, 'the worse one looks, the better one gets.'

(4.) **The heart** of **wise ones** (as 'heart' is repeated again, it gives the idea of 'that heart' spoken of before. This, however, as occurring in a new clause containing a fresh sentiment, must not be pressed too far) **is in the house of mourning, and the heart of befooled ones in the house of rejoicing.** This aphorism is very suggestive: the heart of the wise is improved in the house of sadness; fools, or rather befooled ones, who are mistaken with their own joy, are improved in the house of feasting, but it is an improvement in evil. This equivoke the rendering of the LXX. preserves.

(5.) **Good is it to hear the rebuke** of a **wise one** (גערת occurs in this book here only, but at Prov. xiii. 1, 8, xvii. 10), **above a man** (*i.e.* any one) **hearing a song** of **befooled ones** (the hiphil form is here especially to be noticed, 'many befooled ones sing;' as Jeremy Taylor says, 'We commonly enter singing into the snare.' Ginsburg would amend this passage by relegating the איש to the first clause; but this is to miss the point, which is, that 'it is better to listen to a wise rebuking, than for *any one* to hear the song of the befooled').

(6.) **For as the voice of the thorns under the pot** (there is both alliteration and equivoke here, the root סור having the meaning, 'to turn aside,' 'be crooked,' etc., and סר, 'displeased,' 1 Kings xx. 43, xxi. 4) **so** (the word 'so' is somewhat emphatic, as standing alone) **a laugh of the befooled** (generic), **also this is vanity** (*i.e.* an instance of evanescence).

(7.) **For the oppression** (generic, 'the affliction of life') **makes mad** (poel future, occurs Job xii. 7, Isa. xlii. 5; compare also chap. ii. 2, which we have seen is the madness of false expectation) **a wise man** (hence

8 Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

10 Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire [1]wisely concerning this.

11 ¶ Wisdom [2]*is* good with an inheritance: and *by it there is* profit to them that see the sun.

12 For wisdom *is* a [3]defence, *and* money *is* a defence: but the excellency of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

13 Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked?

[1] *Heb.* out of wisdom.
[2] *Or,* as good as an inheritance, yea, better too. [3] *Heb.* shadow.

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the meaning must be, that the oppressions or afflictions of life put out the calculations of the wise, and make their expectation false) **and destroys with respect to the heart** (את לב, therefore emphatic; hence the LXX. render τὴν καρδίαν, and the meaning is, that affliction (comp. ch. iv. 1) not only makes his expectations false, but disappoints his desires; which clearly, with the advantages of sorrow stated above, it ought not to do to a *wise* man) **of his purpose.** (Following the LXX., who derive the word from the root מתן, which exists in the Arabic, and also in the Syriac—see Bernstein, s. v., ܡܛܠ 'moratus est,' 'tardus fuit;' 'that which is purposed or appointed' would be quite a natural meaning, for נתן not only has the meaning 'to give,' but also 'to settle or appoint.' If we render with the A. V. 'gift,' we introduce an idea altogether new and strange, while with the rendering supported by the LXX. and unpointed text, the aphorism connects itself with what went before and follows after.

(8.) **Good is the end of a matter** (in its technical sense of a reasoning) **above its beginning; good is a long spirit above a high spirit** (this is equivocal; '*long*-suffering is better than *high*-mindedness' will render the equivoke. Thus, then, it appears that these aphorisms are all closely related to one another, or, at any rate, hang on the same thread of argument. The existence of oppression makes the wise man mad by reason of disappointed hopes, and destroys his purpose; but he must wait to see the end, and be patient. 'Good' has occurred in seven paradoxical relations, having the appearance of evil. The same strain is continued in the following, but the argument is somewhat different).

(9.) **Do not hasten in thy spirit to be angered** (by disappointment), **for anger in the bosom of befooled ones rests.**

(10.) **Do not say** (אל, the particle of prohibition being repeated, this second is equivalent to 'neither say') **what was** (how was it) **that the days** (with the article, and therefore generic), **the former ones** (again generic, in strict apposition) **were good ones beyond these** (the whole construction of the sentence shows that the *Laudator temporis acti* is here specially reprehended), **because not from wisdom** (*i.e.* the *wisdom* of such an inquiry is here negatived) **thou askest** (שאל is to ask in the sense of wishing to have—Ex. iii. 22) **upon** (or about) **this.**

(6.) [Yet] good is the end of a matter, and more than its beginning.

(7.) [And] good is the long-suffering soul above the high swelling spirit.

Do not be in haste to be disappointed; for disappointment nestles in the bosom of the befooled.

Do not say either, How was it that former days were so good as compared with these? because it is not wisdom which prompts you to inquire in this way.

As good is wisdom as an inheritance, and something more, to those who see the sunshine; for the shelter of wisdom is just as the shelter of money: but the profit of knowledge is, the wisdom that enables its possessor to live.

Consider then, with regard to the working of the Almighty, that none is able to explain with regard to what He has made com-

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(11.) **A good is wisdom** (the two nouns both abstracts or in strict agreement) **together with an inheritance, and a profitable thing** (יִתְר, which the Masorets point as a participle, not יִתְרוֹן, which would give a different idea, *i.e.* a 'profit generally,' which, in the sense of this book, wisdom is not always, for it fails, through unforeseen accidents, of always attaining its end, and sometimes perishes like folly; but with an inheritance, wisdom to know how to use it is always a real advantage in some way even in this life, and hence the qualification) **to those that see the sun** (generic, as a sun which is light and warmth indeed, but also glare and heat).

(12.) **For in shadow of the wisdom is in shadow of the silver.** (The sentence, whichever way we take it, is enigmatical, as indeed the form shows. The LXX. render *ad sensum*, 'Because in her shadow, wisdom is as the shadow of silver,' but very probably not because they read differently, this rendering merely gives the equivoke; for the literal meaning of the sentence, as it stands in the text, is, '*Because in the shadow of wisdom* generically, *is the same as to be in the shadow of money.*' The idea of shadow arises naturally from that of *sunshine*, spoken of above; for we must remember that in the East, shadow is always desired, and it is to the natives of southern Europe and Asia the symbol of pleasant refreshment. Shadow and sun are cognate ideas—see Ps. xci. 1, Isa. xxxii. 2. Again, the root כסף has the meaning to desire earnestly—see Job xiv. 15, Ps. xvii. 12; hence the further play upon the words.) **And a profit of a knowledge of the wisdom?** (generic, this special wisdom, but the passage might also be rendered, and a 'profit of knowledge, it is wisdom which,' etc.) **it enlivens its possessor.** (The Masorets, by accenting חַיָּת with zakeph, separate it from what follows, and so render as above. Thus the meaning is—'and there is this advantage in the knowledge of wisdom, it makes its possessor live,' or gives him life: but not absolutely so; this appears from what follows.)

(13.) **See** (as the verb stands first, this is the emphatic word in the sentence, equivalent, therefore, to 'observe, however') **with respect to the working of the Deity, for who is enabled to set in order** (occurs chaps. i. 15, xii. 9 only, and is a word peculiar to Ecclesiastes; it is used in the

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath [1]set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

15 All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that prolongeth *his life* in his wickedness.

16 Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou [2]destroy thyself?

17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die [3]before thy time?

18 *It is* good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also

[1] *Heb.* made. [2] *Heb.* be desolate. [3] *Heb.* not in thy time.

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technical sense of 'resolve,' or 'account for,' a providential mystery) **with respect to that which** (the LXX. give the force of this את here by the rendering ὃν ἂν ὁ Θεὸς) **He hath involved it?** (עות, in hithpael, occurs Job xix. 6, chaps. i. 15, and xii. 3. The cognate עוה occurs nearly as often, and with the same signification, which is the exact opposite of תקן, 'to involve,' 'make complex.' 'Who can resolve that with respect to which He has determined that it shall be involved?' is the precise meaning given by the suffix to the verb.)

(14.) **In a day of good** (טובה, the abstract here having the meaning of 'prosperity') **be in good** (which the LXX. render, 'live in good,' and as the root is repeated, we must render, *that* good), **and in a day of** (with the meaning, 'and in a time also of') **evil** (abstract as above) **see** (emphatic, not only from the alliteration of רעה and ראה, but from its being the same word at the end as at the beginning, ver. 13). **Moreover, with respect to this, to the counterpart** (לעמת, see chap. v. 16 (15), where this word is discussed) **of that makes** (*i.e.* so works) **the Deity, for the reason** (על דברת, occurs chaps. iii. 18, vii. 14, viii. 2, and in the same sense 'to the intent that') **he might not** (contract relative, with the negative, and involving its usual subjunctive meaning) **find** even **humanity, his future** (*i.e.* that which comes after him or succeeds, whether this be due to his own labour or otherwise) **anything** (which is reserved to the end of the sentence, and is equivalent to 'anything at all.' Thus, then, the transition to the next clause is quite manifest. It follows of course that this uncertainty as to the result applies even in the case of virtue and vice: this, therefore, is the topic next discussed).

(15.) **With regard to the whole** (with את and the article, 'with regard to the whole of life' is therefore the meaning, as so often in this book—see chap. i. 2) **I have observed in the days of my vanity** (with the idea, therefore, 'so far as my short experience goes') that **there is** (a person or thing) **made right, yet perishing in his righteousness, and** that **there is** (as יש is repeated it becomes emphatic, and thus we must render 'there also is') **an impious caused to be prolonging** (himself) **in his mischief** (*i.e.* the hiphil participle gives the idea that this prolongation of life by evil means, or the like, is due to the wickedness itself: it is again the problem of successful impiety; for the word מאריך comp. Ex. xx. 12).

(16.) **Do not be made right too much, and do not** (repeated, 'do not also') **make thyself wise** (the hithpael occurs only Ex. i. 10, and has a sinister meaning. Pharaoh's policy with the children of Israel was for the time dealing wisely, but also a 'prolonging in wickedness') **to excess** ('or over and

plex. In the day then of good, accept the good; in the day of distress, discern: for the one indeed hath the Almighty appointed as the counterpart of the other, for the very purpose that Humanity should by no means be able to discover anything of what is to result.

With regard to the whole of life, then, I have observed during the days of my evanescent existence that there may be a just man who perishes by reason of his justice, and there may be an impious man who prolongs his existence by his wrong. Do not be then righteous to excess, or make thyself wise too confidently: why shouldest thou be grievously disappointed? but then, do not be wicked to excess either, and by no means become a clever fool: why shouldest thou die when it is not thy time? It is good that thou

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above what is reasonable,' expecting a '*profit*,' יתר, from it, in that sense in which this word is used in this book). **Wherefore shouldest thou be desolated?** (but the hithpolel occurs Ps. cxliii. 4, Isa. lix. 16, lxii. 5, Dan. viii. 27, and in all cases with the idea of 'consternation' at an unexpected and afflictive occurrence. Thus the meaning must be, 'that this righteousness overmuch, and wisdom beyond what is reasonable, will disappoint.' We must not then, in the days of our vanity, expect too much from right actions; they may to all appearance prove as disastrous as the most impious could be. In the same way impiety, that is, high-handed and presumptuous rebellion against right, may succeed so well that it may cause a prolongation of itself; the very word is sarcastic, as pointing to an end of wrong at last. The inference naturally seems to be—If this be so, what is the use of doing right at all? but a deeply sarcastic refutation is given to this thought in the succeeding clause).

(17.) **Do not be impious to excess, and do not be** (the quadruple repetition of the particle of prohibition gives emphasis to it, especially at the close of the sentence—(1.) Do not be over right, and (2.) do not be over wise either, (3.) nor impious either, nor (4.) still less either a clever fool, are the four stages of the argument; the emphatic תהי is reserved to the last clause here in this member; in the former clause it stands first, giving it thus a still further sarcastic emphasis, something like our 'whatever you are do not be') **an elaborate fool** (סכל, comp. chaps. ii. 19, x. 3, 14; and see the meaning of this term discussed there. This wickedness then, it seems, is wise folly, or false prudence). **Wherefore shouldest thou die in** what is **not your time?** The sarcasm is surely deep and cutting which, covertly reminding the impious that he has yet to die, advises him not to die before his time.

(18.) **Good it is that** (full relative, referring to both the following clauses) **thou layest hold of this, and, moreover, from that do not withhold with respect to thine hand** (the root נח occurs chaps. ii. 18, x. 4, xi. 6; see also Gen. ii. 15, xix. 16, etc.—the precise meaning being, in all these cases, 'to lay up.' The LXX. translate this word by *μιαίνῃς*, 'defile;' and hence consider the word to refer to the second clause of the verse above; but it may be doubted, as Schleusner points out, whether the rendering of the LXX. is not a misreading of Symmachus' *μὴ ἀνῇς*, which was successively altered to *μίανῃς* and *μὴ μίανῃς*, so that with this before us we may well reject their reading as not entitled to disturb our confidence in the Hebrew text; observing also that it is את ידך, *i.e.* do not rest, or do not lay it up, *with respect to* thy hand; the conclusion is, do not touch either the wickedness or the false prudence. The rendering of the A. V. is ambiguous; it is not clear what

from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

19 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city.

20 For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

21 Also [1]take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:

22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

23 ¶ All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it *was* far from me.

24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

[1] *Heb.* give not thy heart.

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the second 'this' refers to, but evidently admits of the meaning above. The whole drift then of the aphorism is, 'lay hold of right notwithstanding, and have nothing to do with wickedness'). **For** he who **fears God goes out of** (or 'gets free from,' as את follows) **with respect to all of them** (*i.e.* the whole four difficulties here mentioned; he will neither be over-expectant of an immediate result from his righteousness, nor of his prudence; on the other hand, he will not be either impious, or an elaborate fool).

(19.) **The wisdom** (wisdom generically) **strengthens** (a play between תאחז above and תעז here) **to the wise more than ten** persons who **have been invested with power who are** (emphatic) **in a city.** Powerful men in a city are hard to overcome, or get at; ten, the indefinite number, gives the idea of 'ever so many.'

(20.) **For a man** (a man, as a specimen of the race, which we have already seen is the meaning of this word standing alone without the article) **there is not** (for we have in this case אין, and not לא; thus the meaning is, 'there is not a single man') **made right in the earth who does good and does not sin** (*i.e.* 'make wicked mistakes:' hence, as no man is perfectly right, it would be unreasonable to expect a perfect result; thus the relevancy of v. 17 is apparent. If our right acts do not always succeed, it is but just, considering the many sins we all commit).

(21.) **Moreover** (an additional reason), **to all the words** (הדברים, in the usual sense, and very emphatic as followed by the corresponding verb) **which they speak** (reason about) **do not give thine heart** (because they are not worth thinking about: the reason follows), **which** (repeated, equivalent to 'they are such that') **not dost thou hear** ('as thou wouldest not listen to if') **with respect to thy servant** he was **cursing** thee.

(22.) **For moreover, times many knows** (but the LXX. read יֵרַע, *κακώσει*, 'afflicts,' that is, the servant does so. Symmachus also reads *ὅτι πρὸς πλεόνακις καιροῦ πονηρεύσεται καρδία σου*, supporting the LXX.; the Syriac, on the other hand, reads as the Hebrew. If, therefore, יֵרַע was the real reading, the change took place in ancient times) **thy heart** (which is nom. to ידע) **which** (the third repetition of the relative; it ought therefore to be taken in the meaning of 'and this,') **also thou** (which is emphatic

shouldest lay hold of the former; moreover, of the latter, by no means let your hand touch it, for he that fears God comes out safely with regard to all of these.

This wisdom is a better defence to the wise than ten powerful men within a fortress. However, there is no single man on earth so right that he always does good, and never makes a wicked mistake. Besides, to all those arguments by which men direct themselves, do not give much heed, just as thou hadst better not listen to thy servant when he curses thee; because thou knowest that besides, times out of mind thyself also hast cursed—some one else. All this have I explored by means of wisdom. I said, I shall be wise enough, but what may be is altogether beyond me! beyond me how far? a double depth! how could any find it?

To come to another point then, in my own experience of know-

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if we follow the Masorets, who point אַתָּה, in which apparently they are supported by both the LXX. and Symmachus) **hast cursed others.**

Were it not for this suspicious אַתָּה there would be no reason at all to disturb the present Hebrew text. Nor, probably, is the evidence strong against it, unless indeed it should turn out, on further investigation and discovery, that when the version of the LXX. was made, there was a greater difference between the letters ר and ד than there is now. If the reading of the LXX. were right, the following was the meaning of the passage:—'Moreover, to all the words which they speak [they being supposed to refer to the wicked, hence the explanatory gloss of B, *ἀσεβεῖς*], do not give thine heart,'—which [amounts to this]—'thou wouldest *not* hear (or listen to) with respect to thy servant cursing thee, because many times he vexes thy heart, which [amounts to this also] in regard that thou hast *cursed* others.' The innuendo being that our reasonings with regard to God's dealings with ourselves are like the rash improper speeches of a grumbling servant. It must be confessed that the expression, אשר גם את קללת, literally, 'which also with respect to thou hast cursed,' is unprecedentedly harsh and elliptical, even for Koheleth. But to alter the text—and the Masoretic punctuation is here a virtual alteration of the text—is to interpret an imaginary document, and not the one which exists before our eyes. The Masorets, however, with their customary caution—and in this respect they are a brilliant example to some modern critics—would not add a single letter, on mere conjecture only, however plausible.

(23, 24.) **All this** (the Masorets point זֶה feminine, equivalent to neuter) **have I tried with wisdom; I said I will be wise** (with ה paragogic, and Taylor in his note observes that this form is optative, and expresses a strong desire [Lange, *Com. on O. T.*, American ed.]; might it not with truth be said that it is the abstract idea of which the verb is the concrete, 'I shall be wisdomed'?), **but that was far from me** (but notice again רחוקה, agreeing no doubt with חכמה understood, but not the less an abstract on that account: it was *farness* or *distance itself* from me—'beyond my reach' is the meaning), **a distant** thing, **what is it which it will be** (that is, that he could not reach by wisdom to discern what the future might be), **and deep, deep** ('doubly deep,' very emphatic), **who will find it out?** (as these questions expect the answer, No, they

25 [1]I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness:

26 And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: [2]whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.

27 Behold, this have I found, saith the Preacher, [3]*counting* one by one, to find out the account:

28 Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.

[1] *Heb.* I and my heart compassed.
[2] *Heb. He that is* good before God.
[3] *Or, weighing* one thing after another to find out the reason.

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are equivalent to 'a distant *thing!* is not it, the future, indeed? and a vast depth which none can discover.'

This concludes this part of the discourse, as is evident from the formula, 'I turned round, I and my heart,' with which the following passage begins; that which is to succeed is a personal experience of another kind.

(25.) **I turned round** (to do something, as this formula always implies), **I and my heart** (for we have here a *confession*) **to know** and **to investigate** (that is in order to know, etc., the prepositions being repeated) **and seek** (without a preposition; the distinction seems to be that the seeking is to be the consequence of the above investigation) **wisdom and device** (חשבון is exclusively a Koheleth word, and occurs ver. 27, ix. 10, only, it is thus not easy to determine its precise meaning, but it is probably, as Moses Stuart points out, the opposite of הללות; and if so, it will be something reasonable, in the sense of wise or well-formed and successful plan, as its opposite is an ill-formed and disappointing one; thus חשבונות—occurs only here, ver. 29, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 15, where it is used to denote Asa's engines of war—is evidently 'efficient contrivances.' To know wisdom and *a device*, then, in this sense, is 'wisdom how to obtain a reasonable or proper result; and, on the other hand, to discover the opposite.' With this accords what follows), **and to know** (as this is repeated it is equivalent to, and so to know) **wickedness** (as) **folly** (כְּסֶל—the only instance of the occurrence of this form in Ecclesiastes—comp. Job viii. 14, xxxi. 24, where we find that 'expectation' is the meaning, though not necessarily in a bad sense, yet clearly so here. The LXX. render *ἀσεβοῦς ἀφροσύνην* (which E. X. alter to *εὐφροσύνην*), 'the folly of a wicked person') **and the false wisdom** (pl. form in וֹת—with the article) **follies** (הוֹלֵלוֹת, as we have seen, comp. chap. i. 17, of the disappointing kind. The LXX. render here *ὀχληρίαν*, 'trouble,' and *περιφοράν*, 'madness,' with *καὶ* 'and,' which is so far wrong, as there is no conjunction in the original. The meaning of this passage it is no doubt difficult to discover, but if we are right in the above analysis the interpretation must be as follows: 'I turned myself round, I and my heart—(or, my own personal experience) to know and to investigate, and so seek, wisdom and well-formed plans: and so to recognise a wicked folly; and [a series of] falsely-wise acts, [which were] disappointing follies.' The punctuation represents the accents, the larger distinctive accents being represented by the longer pauses. The Syriac reads ܠܡܕܥ ܘܠܡܒܥܐ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܘܚܫܒܢ ܘܠܡܕܥ ܣܟܠܘܬܐ ܘܫܛܘܬܐ ܘܣܟܠܘܬܐ ܘܫܛܘܬܐ, 'to know the wickedness of the fool, and folly and *adultery*,' which coincides with the above; a

ledge and investigation: I mean the discovery of wise and prudent experiments by which one may recognise wickedness as folly, and false-prudence as mad disappointment. Now, I have made a discovery, and that more bitter than death; it is with respect to woman, when she is in the nature of an ensnarer, her affection seductions, and her hands bondage. A real good in the sight of the Almighty is it to be delivered from her, but the erring sinner is taken by such as she. *Observe,* this have I discovered, and this is what the Preacher announces, one after another, so as to find out a wise experiment; but which I have longed for without discovering: one single specimen of Humanity in a thousand I discovered; but a woman in all these I did not discover. Only observe, this I have discovered, namely, that the Almighty has with respect to humanity

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reason for the peculiar rendering 'adultery' will appear presently).

(26.) **And finding** (a participle written full, giving a peculiar emphasis to this word) **am I a bitterness above death with respect to the woman** (את with the article, which the LXX. note by *σὺν*, as usual; thus 'woman' is generic, hence the precise idea seems to be 'and a discovery of mine more bitter than death—is with respect to woman;' and, again, this follows the accentuation, which makes a pause at 'death,' **who** (but the relative is full, and so refers back to the whole clause, 'when she') **is snares** (masculine plural, and hence distributive, 'in the nature of an ensnarer' then; see Prov. xii. 12, chap. ix. 14, where this form alone מצודה in the fem. occurs, chap. ix. 12, Isa. xxix. 7, Ezek. xix. 9, and with shurek at Job xix. 6; there is a slight difference in meaning in these forms) **and allurements** (the root חרם is to destroy, and the noun signifies 'a cursed thing' as often as a 'net;' see Deut. vii. 26, Josh. vi. 17) **her heart** (singular following plural; her heart then is in the nature of things which allure to destruction, a whole armoury of them, as it were, in her love) **and bonds** her **hands** (or 'powers'); **good in the sight of Divine providence** ('a real good is it in the sight of Divine providence' is the meaning) **is deliverance from her** (emphatic), **but the erring one** (a full participle, which the LXX. note) **is taken by her** (emphatic).

(27, 28.) **Observe this, have I found the speech of Koheleth** (it is usually said that אמרה is a feminine agreeing with קהלת, but קהלת was a king, and so certainly masculine. It has been proposed to write אמר הקהלת, but this is another instance of the attempt to cut the knot by altering the text, besides in that case Koheleth would be generic. We must therefore fall back upon the usual meaning of feminines as the abstract of the masculines. Now, אמר is 'to say,' to 'announce,' and therefore the abstract will be 'the announcement;' this abstract, however, stands by itself, and is not joined closely to קהלת, as in that case it would have been אמרת. Attending then to these principles of grammar, the meaning will be, 'observe this, I have found it, and announce it as Koheleth,' an additional proof that here we have a personal experience of Koheleth's) **one to one to find a wise result,** (that is collecting instance after instance, or trying one method after another so as to find the wise result, in contrast to the disappointing folly mentioned above) **which yet seeks my soul,** and **has not found** (the 'not' is emphatic, and denies that he has discovered it: experimental science did no more for him than moral); **a man** (אדם; we should have anticipated איש from the context, but אדם

29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHO *is* as the wise *man?* and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and [1]the boldness of his face shall be changed.

2 I *counsel thee* to keep the king's commandment, and *that* in regard of the oath of God.

3 Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

[1] *Heb.* the strength.

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includes both sexes, so that we have a sarcastic equivoke) **a single one from a thousand have I found, but a woman in all these have I not found** (that is, that he could come to no general conclusion; only in his experience he had met with one man but not with one woman, the allusion being evidently to his thousand wives and concubines. From this individual history we are allowed to make our own conclusions. In the case of Solomon, it was his numerous wives which turned away his heart. He had apparently one or two male friends, such as Zadoc and Nathan, that he could trust. The word 'found' occurs seven times in its different forms—it is *all* he could discover).

(29.) **Only** (which standing first is emphatic: 'This *alone* is a real discovery, or a safe induction from my numerous trials') **observe, this have I discovered, which** is that he has **made** even **the Deity with respect to the man** (*i.e.* 'has done in regard to man,' the LXX. notice this by *σὺν τὸν ἄνθρωπον*) **right** (or 'correct,' see 1 Sam. vi. 12, Prov. xi. 3), **but they** (plural following singular—'every one of them') **seek devices** (plural abstract, and as it is used evidently in a sinister sense, we may translate 'machinations') **many** (masculine, notwithstanding the fem. plural, *i.e.* not many in the abstract, 'but many a one'—all kinds of sinister plans to evade God's right order, of which Solomon's harem was a signal instance. He would have had more real enjoyment had he obeyed the rule at Gen. ii. 24, which assigns one man to one woman, and the spirit of that at Lev. xxi. 1, which enjoins a Hebrew woman. This harem of strange women was at once Solomon's most elaborate folly, bitterest disappointment, and saddest fall: it was an experiment in search of happiness, running counter to God's just and right commands, and proved a most miserable failure; and the only conclusion which could be drawn from it was, that God's way is invariably the best. The connexion with the following will be best understood if we consider it a reflection on his own failure).

VII. (1.) **Who is as the wise?** (the LXX., rendering *ad sensum*, translate *τίς οἶδεν σοφούς*, 'who knows wise men or things?' which E. and X. alter to *σοφίαν*, 'wisdom.' 'Who is as *the* wise?' or, as מִי stands first, 'ah, who is really wise?' There is a double meaning here—a lamentation over his own failure, and a natural reflection on the superior wisdom of *the* Wise One, or, as we should write, the Omniscient) **and who** ('and who too') **knows a solution** (פִּשֶׁר occurs Dan. ii. 4, 5, 6, etc., but in that prophet only, and is used to signify the interpreta-

done what is correct, but *they* have sought out machinations without number.

Ah, then, who is really wise, and who knows how to solve the enigma of this matter? that wisdom of humanity which enlightens his face, for the haughty face is detestable. As for me, a royal word observe, and upon reasoning about the Divine decree, do not hasten. From His presence canst thou go? Do not rest on any evil word, for all that His providence ordains He does; in Whose royal word is authority, and who dare say to Him, What doest Thou? Whoso keeps the commandment will not know a reason which leads to wrong. For a wise heart does know that there is a time and a judgment; because to every providence there is a time and a judg-

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tion of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, hence LXX. λύσις) **of a reason**: (who then is so wise that he knows how to solve the matter, or give it its true interpretation? The answer follows) **that wisdom of a man enlightens** (but as חכמה follows חכם, it rises into importance, 'that wisdom of a man which enlightens') **his countenance** (there is a manifest allusion here to Prov. xvi. 15, and the meaning of 'enlightens his face' is, 'gives him favour or satisfaction'), **but the strength of his face** (which has the meaning of sternness or wilfulness, see Deut. xxvii. 50) **is hated** (the Masorets propose the alteration from יִשְׂנָא to יִשָּׂנֵא; but this was because they did not understand the context; the LXX. render ἀναιδὴς προσώπου αὐτοῦ μισηθήσεται, 'but a man of shameless countenance will be hated,' and also the Syriac, but strictly ישנא is impersonal, 'one hates.' The meaning then, read in the light of Prov. xvi. 15, evidently is, that obstinacy is that which a king hates, and of course *a fortiori* the Divine King).

(2.) **I** (emphatic, none of the ancient versions take any notice of this emphatic pronoun, a reason for which will appear presently) **the mouth of a king** (not the king, thus the literal meaning is, 'I, a king's word') **keep** it (the explanation is to be found in the equivocal use of the word 'king,' which has an undertone of reference to the Great King: compare also chap. ii. 12, and observe how excellently a word of counsel suits the passage. The meaning therefore is, I will give you a royal word to keep, or guard), and **upon reasoning** (על דברת, see chap. iii. 18, and with the same meaning 'upon the reasonings about,' the Masorets put a strong distinctive accent on וְעַל, thus separating it from the following words, but this was because they did not see the exact meaning) **the oath of God** (see Deut. vii. 8, Jer. xi. 5; the oath of God then is that which God has determined on, and we are especially to regard this, and take care that we use no hasty words or expressions about it).

(3.) **Do not hasten** (this the LXX. and Syriac join on to the preceding verse, against the accentuation of the Masorets, and this makes better sense) **from his face thou shalt go** (but as 'face' is the emphatic word, it is clear that the clause is in the nature of a question, or rather with a note of admiration, *i.e.* 'From his face are you going!'), **do not stand** ('abide,' or 'stay') **in a reason which is an evil one for all he provides** (יחפץ, the verb, of which חפץ is the root, and which invariably means 'Divine providence' in this book) **he does** (he always acts, therefore, according to the pleasure of his Divine providence).

4 Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?

5 Whoso keepeth the commandment [1]shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

6 ¶ Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man *is* great upon him.

7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

8 *There is* no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither *hath he* power in the day of death: and *there is* no [2]discharge in *that* war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: *there is* a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.

10 And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone

[1] *Heb.* shall know. [2] *Or*, casting off *weapons*.

(4.) **In whom** (or 'in which,' for it refers back to the whole idea of God's providence) **the matter of a king is powerful** (*i.e.* a power, 'matter,' דבר as usual being taken in its technical sense of the matter reasoned about and the matter itself. The LXX. invert the order of the words—a very unusual proceeding with them: it is, however, to be observed that B omits λαλεῖ, the word out of place), **and who shall say to him, What doest thou?**

(5.) **One keeping the command** (a participle, that which is commanded) **does not know a matter** (as above) which is **evil, and time and judgment knows** (repeated; thus the exact meaning is, 'but time and judgment') **the heart of a wise man** ('does know').

(6.) **For to every providence there is a time and a judgment** (that is, a proper season for its occurrence, and a time when it will be shown to be in the economy of providence), **for the wrong of man** (generic, with the article) **is much upon him** (the LXX. here read דעת, 'knowledge,' γνῶσις; Symmachus and the Syriac read as the Hebrew. On the whole, however, it appears that the text is fully entitled to stand undisturbed, as it makes better sense, and, supposing an error in the LXX., it might so readily occur from a misreading of letters so much alike as ד and ר. The older forms, however, of these two letters were not so much alike, as is shown by the Moabite stone, and hence caution is required in coming to a judgment; but further, γνῶσις has already been used in a bad sense, see chap. i. 18).

(7.) **For he is not knowing** (that is, man is not a creature that knows) **what will be** (contract relative with the verb): **for how it will be, who can tell him?** (the particle כי is introduced four times, and each introduces an additional reason strengthening what went before. Thus the wise heart will not know a matter which is bad—will not allow, that is, that in its nature it is so, and he does know that there is an appointed time and judgment which will set all right. First, because to every providence whatever there is such a time and judgment; secondly, because there is so much evil amongst mankind, which of course needs rectification, and will have it, see chap. iii. 15; and because he cannot tell

ment; because also, the wrong of Humanity is great upon him; and because, he is not one who knows what may be; and because, *how* it will be, none can tell him. No man has power over the spirit to restrain the spirit; and there is no powerfulness in the day of death; and there is no putting off the weapons in that warfare: but by no means will *Impiety* deliver those that resort to *it*.

With respect to all this I have observed, with regard to all the works which are done in this work-day world—and greatly am I impressed by it—a time when humanity has a power over itself to injure itself. And on this wise: I have seen the wicked honourably buried, who used to come and go from the place of the holy, and were praised in the city where they had done this: an instance this of the evanescent.

It amounts to this, however: there is no speedy execution of sentence for doing evil, and so the heart of the human race is thus encouraged in them to do that evil; which, however, is a wicked

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what will be, and so right may be discovered and providence vindicated in the future; and lastly, because as none can predict the result of any event, so he is an imperfect judge concerning it. This impotence of man is further set forth in what follows).

(8.) **There is nothing** in (that is, There is not a single) **man caused to have power** (LXX. ἐξουσιάζων) **with the spirit** (the LXX. render with ἐν, 'in') **to the restraint of** (כלא—1 Sam. vi. 10; Jer. xxxii. 3—is used of restraint in prison) **with respect to the spirit** (את with the article, and the noun repeated, making it exceedingly emphatic, which the LXX. note by their customary σὺν: 'to have any restraint with respect to that same spirit' is the meaning) **and there is no power** (that is, 'power to rule or direct') **in the day of death, and there is no discharge** (occ. Ps. lxxviii. 49) **in the warfare, and not delivers** (this standing first is emphatic; it is equivalent to 'but *this* does not deliver') even **impiety in respect of its lord** (or, as our idiom would put it, 'but impiety will not deliver those who resort to it').

(9.) **With respect to all this I have seen,** (*i.e.* 'observed'), **and setting** myself (infin. absolute. Zöckler says the infinitive absolute with copula prefixed indicates an action contemporaneous with the main verb; hence the LXX. render ἔδωκα . . . εἰς), **with respect to my heart, to all the working which** (full relative) **is done** (niphal) **under the sun, the time which** (the LXX. apparently take no notice of עת, but render as if they had read את אשר; but if we take עת as in apposition to תהת ה״, and notice that אשר is repeated, we shall see that the sense is 'I mean with regard to that time when,' etc.) **rules** (or has power) **the man** (mankind generally) **by a man to an injury to him** (not exactly with the meaning of one man injuring another, but rather, that when humanity has any power over itself in the person of other men, it uses this power to injury for the most part, an instance of which follows).

(10.) **And in this wise** (וכבן, occ. only Esth. iv. 16, in the sense of 'in this way') **I have observed wicked ones** (not *the* wicked, but continually instances of the impiously wicked) **sepulchres** (the Masorets point with kibbutz, the paul part., the only other instance of which occurs i Kings xiii. 31; but there the participle is full: we cannot therefore accept the Masoretic pointing as authoritative; it really amounts to an

from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this *is* also vanity.

11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

12 ¶ Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there

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alteration of the unpointed text. The LXX. considered קברים a noun plural, acc. to ובאו, and translate *εἰς τάφους εἰσαχθεντες*, 'carried into the tombs') **and they entered** (I would seek an explanation of the difficulty here in the occurrence of this conjunction 'and,' of which a similar instance is found at ch. ii. 15, 'so they entered a place . . . and they are going,' etc.; *i.e.* 'did this as a habit') **and from a place of the hallowed one** (part.) **they go.** (The rendering of the LXX. is easily explained; they translate as they do, because we have a past tense joined with a present—יהלכו, thus giving the meaning of imperfects. As the wicked could not be said to go after death into the sepulchre, they rendered by a passive, 'were taken,' or because they wished it to be made plain that it was not a mere entering and departing, but that the wicked were buried, *i.e.* honoured, in their graves). **And they were forgotten in the city in which** (full relative, because it does not refer closely to the city only; they were forgotten, not as regards that particular city, but as a general proposition) **thus they did** (but twenty MSS. and all the ancient Vv., except the Syriac, in place of וישתכחו, 'were forgotten,' read וישתבחו, 'praised,' which not only makes better sense, but accounts for the hithpael with its reflexive signification. Symmachus reads, 'And when they had gone round in the holy place, they returned, being praised in the city where they had so done'—*καὶ ὅποτε περιῆσαν ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ ἀνέστρεφον ἐπαινούμενοι ἐν τῇ πόλει.*—See Field's *Hexapla*, p. 396. He also gives the explanatory gloss, *ὡς δίκαια πράξαντες*, 'as those who had done well.' Hence, then, on the whole, we should prefer to take in substance the LXX.'s rendering, and look upon this as setting forth a salient example of successful hypocrisy. After all, the forced renderings of certain critics are in effect alterations of the text, or yield no sense at all. The remark) **This also** is **vanity** (equivalent to 'this then is besides, an instance of evanescence or transitoriness,' is very striking and appropriate at this point, as also what succeeds).

(11.) **Which** (standing at the beginning of a period is emphatic, and thus the subject of the whole. 'It amounts to this' would render it well) **there is nothing done as a sentence** (occ. Esth. i. 20) **of doing the evil speedily, therefore full** is the **heart of the sons of man in them to the doing of an evil** (that is, 'It amounts to this, there is nothing inflicted as a penalty of doing the evil [*i.e.* evil generally] speedily; on that account filled is the heart of men within them in order to do that evil, the word evil being repeated').

(12.) **Which** (repeated at the beginning of a clause, equivalent therefore to 'And it also amounts to this') **a sinning** (חטא, which the Masorets point as a participle,

mistake merely because there is time and a prolongation of impunity; for I am perfectly assured that it must be well with those who fear the Almighty, just because they do fear before Him; and that it cannot be good to the impious man, and he will not prolong his days, even like a shadow, because he is *not* one who fears before God.

There is an instance of evanescence which occurs upon earth, and it is this: that there are righteous persons to whom it results as if they had acted like the impious; and, on the other hand, there are impious persons to whom it may happen as though they had acted like the righteous. So this, said I, is another instance of

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and the LXX. confirm, rendering by a verb) **doing an evil a hundred** (so stands the text at present, but it clearly was not so in the text which the ancient versions used, all of which read differently, except the Syriac, which follows the Hebrew. The LXX. read either מאן or מעת. Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion read מות. Jerome remarks the difficulty; and the Syriac Hexapla shows that the text needed emendation at an early time. We believe the LXX. have preserved the right reading; moreover, that they took ארך as a noun in the sense of 'prolongation,' like אסיר, 'a prisoner,' Gen. xxxix. 20, 22; זעיר, 'a little,' Job xxxvi. 2, Isa. xxviii. 10 and 13; for ומאריך is not a participle hiphil, but is really the substantive ארך with מ. When, however, this word was taken as a hiphil, מעת became unintelligible, and was altered by conjecture to מאת, or מות; hence the meaning is not) **caused to be prolonged** (as it stands in the text, but rather 'and from the prolongation') **to him**: (emphatic, hence the sense of the passage is, noticing the repetition of the מ, and the fact that אשר also stands at the head of the verse, 'And it amounts to this as well: a wickedly mistaking one does evil from the time and from the prolongation of it to HIM,' *i.e.* 'to the other above cited;' and hence the LXX. render αὐτῶν, also referring us back to the hypocritical sinners spoken of above. Then follows a reason introduced with) **for in addition** (besides its being a w icked mistake, a sin which it is always folly to commit) **knowing am I** (*i.e.* 'I do know, notwithstanding appearances') **this** also, **it will be a good to the fearers of God who** (but full relative repeated, and so with the meaning 'because they are those who') **fear** (emphatic, with double *jud*) **before him.**

(13.) **And good** (repeated, 'but good') **it will not be to an impious** person (or act) **and he will not cause to prolong days as a shadow** (he does not prolong his days; they are prolonged indeed sometimes by Divine providence in His inscrutable decrees, and they are as a shadow,—a very impressive figure: the lengthened shadow of the old sinner's years so soon to end in darkness absolute) **which** (full relative, in this equivalent to 'because that') **he is not a fearer before God.**

(14.) **There exists a vanity done** (*i.e.* which occurs or happens to men) **under the sun** (the LXX. render by a perfect, πεπόληται), **which is, that there exists righteous** (full relative) **which** (persons or acts) **it reaches** (hiphil part., Gen. xxviii. 12) **to them** (emphatic) **according to the doing of the wicked ones,** (generic; they attain the same ends as the wicked ones do, in this world at least, for 'under the sun' is put in as a qualifying clause), **and there are wicked ones which it reaches** (here we have the contract relative instead

be just *men*, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also *is* vanity.

15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

16 ¶ When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it;* yea farther, though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*.

CHAPTER IX.

FOR all this [1]I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them.

[1] *Heb.* I gave *or* set to my heart.

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of the full one above. So accurate a writer as Koheleth could hardly have done this without reason. We have already noticed the subjunctive sense the contract relative gives to the verb it joins—possibly he intends a limitation; it is an occurrence which *sometimes* happens, the *rule* however is after all the other way) **to them according to the working** of the **righteous ones, I said which also** (שגם—see chap. i. 17, ii. 15, the only other two instances in which this combination occurs; it clearly gives an interrogatory force, with a tone of surprise) **is vanity?**

(15.) **And I praised, I myself, with respect to** (which the LXX. note by σὺν adverbial) **the gladness** (which is both generic and abstract, 'I came, that is, to a strong conclusion as to the value of present happiness'), **because there is no good to a man under the sun, except to eat, and to drink, and to rejoice, and that** (emphatic) **to abide with him in** (or by means of) **his toil during the days of his life** (*i.e.* no other real good except this gratification immediately arising from the toil) **which is a gift to him** (emphatic) **of Divine Providence** (and so not the result of his labour, but a mercy for which he ought to thank God) **under the sun** (which is in this case reserved to the end of the sentence, and indeed the period, for the next clause is a summing up).

(16.) **As then I have given with respect to my heart** (with את) **to the knowledge of wisdom, and to the appearances** (ולראות); this infinitive with ל is peculiar to Ecclesiastes—occurs chaps. iii. 18, v. 17, and here; see the peculiar shade of meaning given by the conjunction) **with respect to the anxiety** (see chap. i. 13; generic with את, of which, however, the LXX. take no special notice) **which is done**

the transitory! Then I, for my part, expressed a preference with regard to enjoyment, because there is no real good to a man in this work-day world, except to eat, and drink, and be delighted, and that same conjoined with his toil during the days of his life; and because also it is appointed to him of the Almighty in this work-day world. Whence it results, that having set my heart to know wisdom, and to observe with regard to the uncertainty which is suffered upon earth (for indeed, by day and by night also, *rest* does no human eye behold)—so I perceive, with respect to the whole working of the Almighty, how impossible is it for humanity to discover the working out of anything with respect to what is done within this work-day world. Yet it is on account of this that man toils, that he may seek it out, but he does not discover it: and if he thinks wisdom will enable him to know it, it is not sufficient for the discovery either.

FOR with respect to all this, I have laid to my heart that which is to be deduced from it all, which is, that right and wisdom, and any service they can render, are in the hand of the Almighty, and whether [an event be an indication of

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on earth (but we must write 'endured upon earth' to express the meaning, which amounts to this, 'As, then, I have given my heart to the knowledge of wisdom, *i.e.* a scientific knowledge, with regard to the spectacle of that anxious uncertainty which is suffered on the earth'), for **also by day and by night sleep** (the Masorets with great taste put 'sleep' in a clausule by itself) **with his eyes he is not seeing** (*i.e.* this uncertainty is incessant).

(17.) **And I saw** (so I saw, the apodosis of the above) **with respect to all the working of Divine providence, how that is not able** (*not* is emphatic) **humanity to the finding out of** ('or a discovery' of) **with regard to** (the LXX. again write σὺν) **the work** (generic) **which is done** (or suffered, or endured, as being a niphal) **under the sun, because of** (בשל occurs Jonah i. 7 only) **which toils humanity in order to seek it, and does not find it; and also if he says the wisdom** (*i.e.* wisdom generically) **to know it** ('that wisdom is given him to know it') **he is not able** (or rather not enabled) **to find it.** בשל in this place is no doubt used to express a new idea, 'for this,' or 'which cause.' The object of man's toil, *i.e.* the object he has in his labour, is to find out some method by which he may rectify what appears wrong in the course of God's providence: in the strict sense of the term this is impossible. The principle which pervades Koheleth's reasoning is, that enjoyment, as such, is God's gift, and that toil is useless. Labour, however, which is distinguished from toil, is to be done in the fear of God, and the result left to his providence. The argument which is to follow further enforces this.

IX. (1.) **For with respect to all this, I have given it to** (אל, not את, which the LXX. render by εἰς) **my heart, and to sift out** (occ. here only, but comp. chap.

2 All *things come* alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; *and* he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath.

3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

4 ¶ For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know

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iii. 18) **with respect to all this** (but the LXX., dividing the words differently, evidently read ולבי ראת כל זה, which would mean, 'when that heart was seeing all this.' The number of various readings—see Stier and Theile, *Polyglot*—show that this passage was early one of difficulty. The rendering of Symmachus, preserved by Jerome, 'omnia ita statui (fort. ἔταξα) in corde meo ut ventilarem universa,' conveys the meaning; which is, that Koheleth set to his heart that which is the result when the matter is entirely sifted) **which is the righteous and the wise** (generic and plural, all those things which are right or wise generally; 'right and wisdom,' as we speak, is the meaning) **and their works** (*i.e.* what they produce, or, better still, their 'services') are **in the hand of the Deity, also love** (in the abstract), **also hatred** (also abstract, and גם being repeated gives the idea of both love and hatred too) **is nothing, knowing the man** (the negative belongs to the noun, not to the verb, and so the meaning must be 'there is *no man* who does know.' Moreover, the two nominatives absolute, 'love' and 'hatred,' are the subjects of the whole sentence, 'as to love or hatred either, there is no man who knows,' or, better still, 'to whom is made known,' giving the import to the participle) **the whole** (generic) **before them** (distributive plural, any of them, equivalent then 'to anything which is before them').

(2.) **The whole** (but all the ancient Vv. read here הבל, '*vanity*,' and this makes better sense; the error, for such we believe it to be, in the Masoretic text, was one so likely to occur, that, considering the strong weight of testimony in favour of the LXX., and the far better sense it makes with the context, we may well adopt it. As an additional reason for following the LXX., we notice that the Syriac reads ܟܠ ܕܩܕܡܘܗܝ ܗܒܠ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܘܟܠ 'all that is before him is vanity, all just as that which is to all,' combining, therefore, both readings together. Thus it appears that the variation in the texts was a very ancient one. If this reading be adopted, then combining it with the words which follow) **as** (or like this same) **to all** (the meaning will be 'transitoriness is exactly the same to all,' or 'all alike are equally transitory.' If, however, we retain the Masoretic text and pointing, a good sense is made. '*The whole* is as it were to all,' namely) **a happening** which is **one to the righteous, and to the impious, to the good** (the LXX. add here *to the bad*), **to the clean, and to the unclean, to the sacrificer, and to one who has not sacrificed; as is the good so the sinner** (but general, including things as well as persons), **the forsworn as one who an oath fears.**

(3.) **This wrong is in all which is done**

His] love or displeasure either, no man knows from anything he sees before him, evanescence being that which belongs to all. That which happens is just the same to the right and to the wrong, to good [*and to bad,* LXX.], and to clean and to unclean, and to the sacrificer as to one who never sacrifices; as the good, so the erring sinner, the forsworn as though he had feared the oath. This evil is in all which is performed in this work-day world: that there is but one event to all, and so the heart of the human race overflows with wrong, and foolish anticipations are in their inmost hearts while they live, and what succeeds—it belongs to the *dead.* For whoever he may be, he chooses altogether as regarding the *living,* this being his anticipation: for to a dog alive it is indeed better than the lion when he is dead. Yet the living are quite aware that they shall die; but the

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(niphal, and therefore objective; men both do and suffer as though this were so) **under the sun, how a happening** which **is one** (*i.e.* the same) **to all** (the force of this reasoning is made apparent by what follows, as there is no visible reward to these righteous persons as compared with the wicked, wicked men presume); **and moreover, the heart of the sons of Adam is full of** ('overflows with' would represent the idea) **evil, and false expectations** (הוֹלֵלוֹת occurs chap. i. 17—see refs.; the meaning deduced exactly suits this passage; it is the false hope begotten of an evil action, a crime worse than a blunder, to invert a celebrated aphorism) **in their hearts** (לֵבָב is 'the inmost heart'—see Concordance, *sub voce,* for the shade of difference between לֵב and לֵבָב), **in their lives, and their future** (*i.e.* what comes afterwards) **belongs to** (the prep. is אֶל, which the LXX. note, and render by *πρὸς*) **the dead** (generic, with the article).

(4.) **For whoever** (interrog. pronoun followed by אֲשֶׁר, comp. Ex. xxxii. 33; it has here the sense, 'For whoever he be') **chooses** (the Kri reads 'is joined to,' which the LXX., Syriac, Targum, and Symmachus all have; but this and the pointing as a pual is merely a Masoretic conjecture: it would be better with the LXX. to take it in an active sense, *κοινωνεῖ,* 'participates.' The Chetib is perfectly intelligible, however, and is to be preferred) **towards** (אֶל, as in v. 3) **all** (but כֹּל is without the article; hence it has the meaning, the 'whole of') **the lives** (with the article, and hence generic, 'lives generally.' Thus the meaning is, 'For whoever he be, he is one who chooses entirely with relation to the living'), **it is** (יֵשׁ, it exists as such) **an expectation** (בִּטָּחוֹן, occurs 2 Kings xviii. 19, and its parallel Isa. xxxvi. 4 besides this place only, in the meaning of a 'confidence' or 'expectation,' and this meaning gives excellent sense here: 'is his expectation that he will *live:*' no man makes plans on the supposition that he is going to *die;* he may indeed provide for others after he is dead, but the horizon of his own hopes is necessarily bounded by his life). **For** (an additional reason confirming the above) **to a dog alive it is** (emphatic) **good above the lion** (with the article, because this is generic; it is not *a* lion, but lion qualities generally), **the dead** (again generic, for the same reason—'a live dog is better than the lion when he is dead,' is the exact turn of thought).

(5.) **For the living** ones **are knowing that they will die** (this is an additional reason to the above, and so may be rendered, 'but the living are certain that they will *die*'), **but the dead** (pl., with the article, 'the dead persons generally') **are not those**

not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

7 ¶ Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.

9 [1]Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

11 ¶ I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

[1] *Heb.* See *or* enjoy life.

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who are knowing anything (it is not here, be it observed, the existence of knowledge on the part of the dead which is denied, but that, from the author's point of view, the dead are persons who do not know anything: an unevangelic sense has been given to this passage by not attending to this distinction), **and there is nothing further to them** (emphatic) which is a **hire** (or a reward in this life accruing to them as a recompense for their toil), **because forgotten** (niphal in its usual objective sense) is **their remembrance.**

(6.) **Moreover their love, moreover their hatred, moreover their envy** (the triple repetition of גַּם brings this word into prominence, equivalent to 'their love also; yes, their hatred and envy too') **in this present** (כְּבָר, see chap. i. 10, refs.; the word occurs again in its technical sense of the 'present state of things,' and makes excellent sense here), **perish** (abstract 'is a thing perished') **in all which** (full relative) **is done under the sun.** On this follows the most touching piece of sarcasm in the whole work. There is a force and pungency about it which is very striking.

(7.) **Go, eat** (*i.e.* enjoy) in **pleasure thy bread, and drink in heart** of **good thy wine; for so in the present hath prospered the Deity thy workings.**

(8.) **In all season** (עֵת, a providential season—see chap. iii. 1, 19) **let them be** (even) **thy garments white** (it is hardly possible here, when we remember the constant use in Scripture of *white* garments, not to discover one of those hidden allusions with which this book abounds to a pure as alone a happy life; the garments of the sensualist and drunkard are, in the emphatic language of the apostle, 'spotted with *the flesh*'), **and oil** (see ch. vii. 1, as the symbol of luxury and wealth) **on thy head do not**

dead are not aware of anything; and they can have no further recompense, because a forgotten thing is their memorial: and then their love and their hatred also, and their envy as well, as far as this Present is concerned, are perished; and there is no further participation for them in the age, in anything that may be done within this work-day world. Go then, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink in good heart thy wine, if in the present the Almighty prospers thy works. At every opportunity let thy garments be white, and the oil to thy head do not spare. Enjoy life with that woman whom thou lovest, all the days of thy evanescent life, which He grants thee in this hot work-day world,—all these evanescent days, I say, for *that* is all thou canst possess in thy life, and from that toil thyself art toiling ever in this same work-day world. All that thy hand finds to do, to the utmost do it, because there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in the grave, and that is whither thou art hastening.

But to return, I perceived how in this work-day world that not to the swift ones is the race, nor to the strong ones the battle, nor even to wise ones bread, nor yet to prudent ones wealth, nor yet to the instructed ones favour. For time and chance happens with re-

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spare (chap. iv. 8; 'do not stint' or 'save it as for another time,' is the meaning: 'use it when you have the occasion').

(9.) **See lives together with the woman which thou lovest** (it is to be remarked here that Koheleth speaks of a woman in the singular; the idea thus implied is cognate with that of the white garments, it is pure domestic love) **all the days of the lives of thy vanity** (*i.e.* thy evanescent life) **which He gives to thee** (the nom. is no doubt the Deity; but as this nom. is so far off, the verb becomes almost an impersonal) **under the sun all the days of thy vanity** (repeated); **for that same is thy portion in lives in thy toil which thou** (emphatic) **toilest at under the sun** (repeated, and therefore having the meaning, 'under that same sun,' the whole being thus strictly limited to the horizon of this world).

(10.) **All which shall find thy hand in order to do** (that is, everything which it is in thy power to perform in regard of the above), **in thy might do it, because** there **is nothing** of **a work, or a contrivance, or a knowledge, or a wisdom** (all these being without the article, and singular) **in Sheol, which** (is the 'place,' or 'end,' etc.; for we have in English to supply some general word here) **thou** (emphatic) **art going unto** (the meaning is, 'and *that* is whither *thou* art going unto').

(11.) **I turned**, and **see under the sun** ('see' is rightly joined by the accents to the word which follows it; it is, as this formula of introduction shows, another aspect of the same truth as that set forth above) **how not to swift is the race** (מרוץ, occurs here only), **and not** to **mighty ones the war, and also not to wise ones bread, and also not to prudent ones** (occurs Gen. xli. 33 of Joseph, and 1 Kings iii. 12 of Solomon) **an increase, and not to knowing ones a**

12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

13 ¶ This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it *seemed* great unto me:

14 *There was* a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

16 Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard.

17 The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

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favour: (these three nouns, 'bread,' etc., are singular and without the article, the other two are with it), **for time** (the providential season, that is) and **chance** (occurs 1 Kings v. 4 as a noun only; the meaning of the verb, which occurs frequently, is, 'to meet,' 'to approach') **happens with respect to** (את, which the LXX. notice by making the verb compound, *συναντήσεται*) **all.**

(12.) **For also not knows** (it is the verb which is here negatived) **the man** (humanity) **his time** (with את, which the LXX. note by the article), **as fishes which may be caught** (contract relative and pl. niphal) **in a net, the evil one** (an evil net), **and like also birds** when **caught in a snare** (notice the difference between שְׁנֹאחָזִים, which is niph. part. pl., occurs Gen. xxii. 13, and הָאחֻזוֹת, pual part., 'the fishes are *caught*, the birds are *held*'); **like them** *are* **ensnared** (יוקשים, see Deut. vii. 25) **the sons of the Adam to a time** (which is) **evil, as when it falls upon them suddenly.** (It would result from this reasoning that wisdom is of no use at all; but in order to meet this objection, Koheleth cites an instance where it was of great value.)

(13.) **Moreover, this I have seen** (*i.e.* an instance of) **a wisdom under the sun** (*i.e.* in this world, where wisdom avails so little), **and great** (but the noun is an abstract, 'of great value' or importance, 'a really great thing') **is it with regard to me** (LXX., *πρὸς*, *i.e.* he considered that, notwithstanding the observation above, he ought to take it as of considerable account; here was an unexpected deliverance, by means of wisdom, from one of those snares, מְצוֹדִים, spoken of above).

(14.) **A city small, and the men** (אֲנָשִׁים, 'weak men') **in it** (emphatic, 'in that same') **a few, and there came against it a king** (who was) **great, and he surrounded it, and built over against it networks very great ones;**

(15.) **and was found in it** (again emphatic) **a man** (אִישׁ, the rest are אֲנָשִׁים) **poor** (chap. iv. 13, and here only, מִסְכֵּן, LXX. *πένητα*. The meaning of *πένης* is that kind of poverty which seeks its food by labour, and differs from *πτωχός*, which signifies a mendicant. Fuerst gives the derivation,

gard to them all. For so also Humanity knows not its time, but just like fishes which have been caught in a net, or birds held fast in a snare, just like them the sons of men are ensnared in some evil time, as it falls upon them—suddenly.

Nevertheless, I have observed the following instance of wisdom in this work-day world, and which appeared to me of great moment. There was a little city, and the men therein were a few; and there came a great king against it, and invested it, and built a net-work [of fortifications] around it. Now there was found therein a poor wise working man, and *he* it was who saved the city by his wisdom; yet men did not remember that same person because he was a poor working man. Yet *I* should say myself that wisdom was a real good, and better than strength, yet the wisdom of the poor working man is despised, and his words just those which are not listened to.

These words of the wise in a silence are heard:
More than the shriek of a ruler with fools.

סכן, of the root, which would imply such a meaning as the LXX. have), **wise** (there is no copula between these two qualifying words. It is not a poor *and* wise man, but a man economically wise—who could make his wisdom go a long way), **and saved** (even) **he** (the turn of meaning is, that the safety of the city was found in himself, as the embodiment of wisdom) **the city** (with את emphatic, which the LXX. notice by the rendering, *διασώσῃ αὐτὸς τὴν πόλιν*) **in his wisdom**; **and a man** (not exactly 'humanity,' which we have seen would require the article, but 'man' as representing the individuals generally) **did not remember** (the verb follows the nominative), **with respect to that man** (את, with the article, which the LXX. notice by *σὺν*, with a *genitive!* but in reality the gen. is governed by the verb, *σὺν* being adverbial), **the poor one, even that same.** (The shade of meaning given by the article is, that mankind, as a rule, do not adequately remember, and so neither reward, wisdom when associated with poverty. 'The poor inventor and his sorrows,' have passed into a proverb.)

(16.) **Then said I** (in opposition to 'man,' above), **good is wisdom above might**; **and the wisdom of the poor** (with the article) **is despised, and his words** (or reasonings, used still in the technical sense common to this book) are those **which are not listened to.**

(17.) **Those words** (repeated) **of wise men in rest are heard** (but notice בנחת is an ambiguous word,—see Job xxxvi. 16; the root נחת is to press down, and hence the equivoke. These words of the wise man in 'a going down' are those which are heard, *i.e.* in a 'time of pressure,' or in distress; 'in quiet,' is also a meaning, and a very good one, being that which expresses, without doubt, the main intent in the passage) **above the cry** (Gen. xviii. 20. Fuerst considers that צעק is an older form and זעק modern, yet both are used in Gen. xviii. 20, 21, but the references will be seen to support the idea that זעקה is the 'cry of emotion,' while צעקה is any 'loud cry;' if so, there is a special reason why it should be used in this place. Again, מזעקה might be a participle meaning a 'cry of distress,' thus giving force to the equivoke), **of a ruler with the befooled.**

18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

CHAPTER X.

DEAD [1]flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: *so doth* a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour.

2 A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.

3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his [2]wisdom faileth *him*, and he saith to every one *that* he *is* a fool.

4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

5 There is an evil *which* I have seen under the sun, as an error *which* proceedeth [3]from the ruler:

[1] *Heb.* Flies of death. [2] *Heb.* his heart. [3] *Heb.* from before.

(18.) **A good** (repeated, so that it corroborates what is found in v. 16) is **wisdom above weapons of an encounter, and sinning once** (in the sense of making a wicked mistake, or 'one wicked mistaker,' either person or thing) **destroys good the much.**

X. (1.) **Flies of death** (זְבוּב, occurs Isa. vii. 18 only, as an emblem of the Egyptian plague) **cause to stink** (sing., *i.e.* a single blow-fly out of many will do this, see Prov. xiii. 5 for the only other instance of fut. hiphil), and **cause to belch out** (Ps. lix. 7, Prov. xv. 2, *i.e.* with putrefaction) **the oil** (see chap. vii. 1) **of the apothecary. Precious more than wisdom more than honour** (*i.e.* and *more* than honour also), **follies** (but observe סִכְלוּת, elaborate follies or false prudence, ch. ii. 3), **a little** (distributive singular, one out of many such. The LXX. render τίμιον ὀλίγον σοφίας ὑπὲρ δόξαν ἀφροσύνης μεγάλην, 'and a little wisdom is more precious than great glory of folly.' The objection to this rendering of the LXX. is that they displace, quite contrary to their usual custom, '*a little*,' which comes at the end of the sentence, a difficulty which D. F. X. palliate by reading μεγάλης —'than the glory of *great* folly.' The Syriac reads, 'so a little folly is more weighty than wisdom and great glory.' Symmachus reads, κἂν μικρά, 'even if a little.' On the whole, however, and remembering the meaning of סִכְלוּת, which is a perverse or false wisdom, the text as it stands makes very good sense: 'A single blow-fly will corrupt and make ferment the [carefully prepared] oil of the apothecary; so more precious than wisdom or honour, even is a little one out of the many perverse follies,' *i.e.* this perverse kind of wisdom will destroy a reputation for intellect and probity, and that also even when the gain proposed is but a small matter, and will cause the subject of it to sacrifice prudence and reputation for the sake of some whim which he knows is not worth having).

(2.) **The heart of a wise man is at his right, but the heart of a foolish one is at his left** (the heart is really at the left side, but this is the natural heart. Heart is however to be understood not as meaning

A real good is wisdom above weapons of fight: but a single erring sinner destroys this good very much.

ONE of a swarm of blow-flies tainting corrupts the confectioner's conserve, and esteemed above reason and above reputation too is of false prudence—just a little. The heart of the wise man is at his right hand, but the heart of a foolish one is at his left hand. And also in the way, like the wise fool he is, out of heart he walks, and says to all, What elaborate folly *this* is!

If the spirit of the ruling one should go forth against thee, thy station do not quit, because a remedy may cure wicked errors which are great.

There exists an evil which I have observed in this work-day world, like an error which goes forth from before the face of the

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the understanding, but moral sentiments, which is its metaphorical signification in this book).

(3.) **And moreover in the way** (which word 'way' is so constantly used in an ethical sense—Ps. cxix. 1—that we cannot overlook it here) **like that which is the wise fool's** (the Masorets notice the article here, and pronounce it superfluous, but it is not so; for the meaning is, that it is like the perversely wise fool's way generically, in this) that as **he walks, his heart** (the third time 'heart' has occurred in this passage, raising the word into great emphasis and importance), **fails** (the Authorized Version considers this to mean a failure in wisdom, but it is rather a failure of confidence, which is the ethical meaning of the term 'heart') **and says** (the nearest nominative is לֵב, heart, and so the LXX. understood, for they render ἃ λογιεῖται, κ.τ.λ. 'that which he thinks of' *is* folly; this makes good sense) **to all, perverse folly it is** (emphatic, hence the meaning is, 'he is out of heart altogether,' or 'his heart misgives him;' and it says, 'what perverse folly it all really is.' Conscience convicts those clever wicked plans, and they who devise them know that they are only elaborate mistakes).

(4.) **If a spirit** of **the ruling one** (not, as usually rendered, the ruler, which does not exactly convey the idea) **goes up against thee** (the LXX. show that they so understood it by rendering *πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐξουσιάζοντος*) **thy place do not yield** (the sense of the passage is, 'If there be too strong a spirit against you, if you are sailing, as it were, in the teeth of the wind, do not yield when you have good grounds for remaining:' this makes excellent sense, is cognate to the accompanying passages, and follows the LXX.) **for a healing** (מַרְפֵּא, occ. Prov. xiv. 30 and xv. 4 only, the LXX. read *ἴαμα*, 'a remedy') **pacifies mistakes** (with the usual idea of culpability attaching to this word) **great ones** (the idea is 'do not yield to mere adverse *circumstances* when even culpable *mistakes* admit of a remedy.')

(5.) **There exists an evil** (notice abstract with its shade of meaning, which) **I have seen under the sun, like that which is**

6 Folly is set [1]in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.

7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; *and* he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom *is* profitable to direct.

[1] *Heb.* in great heights.

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erroneous (שְׁגָגָה, see chap. v. 5 (6), 'an inadvertence'), **which goes out** (the verb has the contract-relative joined with it; the exact idea is that it is like an inadvertence, such as might go out on the part of the ruler's command, the great Ruler being in the mind of the writer, but the proposition is general) **from the face of the caused to have power** (a 'providential mistake,' then).

(6.) **Set** (that is, the ruler does this, but, as usual, this is not expressed when the proposition is intended to have a general bearing) **the perverse fool** (generic—'perverse folly' then will be a good rendering) **in high places many a one, and the rich** (but the hiphil form is worthy of remark, 'persons that make rich') **in a low place** (שְׁפָלָה occurs so punctuated at Ps. cxxxvi. 23 only, rendered 'low estate') **sit.**

(7.) **I have observed servants** (slaves, that is, who ought to serve) **upon horseback, and princes walking as servants** ('ought to do' is no doubt involved in this expression—'servants' repeated being emphatic) **upon the earth** (*i.e.* afoot).

(8.) **Dig** (not necessarily either a participle or an imperative) **a pitfall** (גּוּמִּין occurs here only, and is said to be a late word; it occurs in Arabic and Syriac. That a 'pitfall' is meant is evident from the context), **in it** (emphatic) **he falls** (a sinister intent in digging this pit is not necessarily implied, but the context shows that such is primarily aimed at: this is the more evident when we recollect that חָפַר is to 'dig,' and חָפַר 'to bring to confusion'); **and break a wall** (*i.e.* an enclosure, see Job xix. 8 for the precise meaning of the root, hence also Numb. xxii. 24), **bites him a serpent** (as we say, 'gets bitten by a serpent,' which would naturally lurk in loose stone walls).

(9.) **Cause to move** (hiphal part. of נָסַע, 'bring up'—see Ex. xv. 22) **stones, be troubled** (see Gen. xlv. 5) **with them** (emphatic); **cleaving** (poel part., occurs Ps. cxli. 7; Isa. lxiii. 12 only) **wood** (pl. 'logs of wood') **be endangered** (this is called a future niphal by the Masorets, who so point, but the real meaning of סָכַן is evidently to 'take care,' so that the reading of the LXX. by κινδευνεύσει, 'he shall be endangered,' is *ad sensum*—it is literally 'he shall take care,') **with them** (emphatic, all these are instances of either unexpected or unintentional results).

(10.) **If blunt** (קָהָה—occ. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, and Ezek. xviii. 2—in the sense of 'teeth set on edge:' there the Masorets point as Kal, here as piel) **the iron, and he** (emphatic, but there is no nominative expressed to which this can refer) **not the faces** (usually considered to refer to the edges of the axe-head) **sharpen** (occ. Ezek. xxi. 21 (26), as pilpel of קָלַל, which has the meaning of 'lightness,' 'swiftness;' the word occ. as an adjective, Numb. xxi. 5, in the sense of

Powerful, viz., the setting of false wisdom in high places, and the rich sit in low estate. I have seen serfs on horseback, and princes walking like serfs afoot. One digs a pit, into *that* he falls: or breaks a hedge, gets bitten by a serpent. Moves stones, and finds them in his way: chops wood, must be careful with it. If the axe be blunt, then its edge had best be set: and then if one of the strong hits prevail, the skilful hit was it.

If bites the snake before the charm is sung, then what is the profit of the skilful tongue?

'light,'—our soul loatheth this *light* food) **and strong ones will prevail** (sing. If 'strong ones' be the nominative, this is an instance of a distributive plural—one or more of these will; the fut. piel has the meaning '*strengthen*,' the Kal '*to prevail*,' but we can only consider this as a Masoretic conjecture) **and profit causing success** (but the LXX. render by περίσσεια, 'advantage'—see below; but כשר occ. only Est. viii. 5, and chap. xi. 6; see however כשרון, which occ. chap. ii. 21, iv. 4, v. 10 (11), which we have seen occasion to render 'success;' hence the meaning, 'the made successful is') **wisdom** (not generic, *i.e.* a single instance of it). The general scope is quite clear; it is the superiority of wisdom to brute force, and so all commentators and Vv. understand it; but the exact rendering is very difficult;—all the versions are perplexed and discordant, and the copies of the LXX. have an important textual variation. We will give these at length, beginning with the LXX. as the most ancient. This reads—'Ἐὰν ἐκπέσῃ τὸ σιδήριον καὶ αὐτὸς πρόσωπον ἐτάραξεν καὶ δυνάμεις δυναμώσει καὶ περίσσεια τοῦ ἀνδρείου (which B. reads τῷ ἀνδρὶ οὖ, and E. X. τοῦ ανδρὸς) σοφία—'If the axe-head should fall off, then the man troubles his countenance, and he must put forth more strength; and wisdom is the advantage of an energetic man.' The Syriac version, ܐ ܕܢ ܗܘ ܣܬܡ ܐܦ ܒܨܪ ܡܫܚܐ ܡܫܚܢܐ ܘܡܫܟܚ ܚܝܠ ܘܡܫܟܚ ܚܟܡܬܐ—'If the axe be blunt, and it troubles the face and increases the slain; and the advantage of the diligent is wisdom.' The Vulgate reads—'Si retusam fuerit ferrum *et hoc non ut prius* sed hebetatum fuerit, multo labore exacueter et post industriam sequeter sapientia'—'If the iron should be blunt, and this *not as before*, but should have lost its edge, it is sharpened with much labour; and after industry will follow wisdom.' Jerome renders the former part in conformity with the Vulgate; but after '*non ut prius*,' which he also has, runs on with—'sed conturbatum fuerit, virtutibus corroborabitur, et reliquum fortitudinis sapientia est . . .'—'but is troubled; it shall be strengthened by virtues, and the remainder of strength is wisdom.' It will be seen then that we have reason to suspect a corruption of the text; and we think that the suspicious 'non ut prius' of the Vulgate and Jerome shows what this corruption was. We notice also that neither the LXX. nor the Syriac take any notice of the negative. Guided by the clue thus given, we will venture on the following conjectural emendation of the text. We imagine that it was originally written thus, והוא להפנים קלקל, the ה being written full—like שהתקיף in chap. vi. 10, comp. also chap. viii. 1, Neh. ix. 19—and having the meaning, 'to *the* faces' or 'edges.' Such an insertion of ה being unusual, would cause suspicion to rest on the passage, and the transition to לא פנים would be easy. This, however, was but one out of many possible conjectures, and the Vulgate has preserved

11 Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and [1]a babbler is no better.

12 The words of a wise man's mouth *are* [2]gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* foolishness: and the end of his [3]talk *is* mischievous madness.

14 A fool also [4]is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?

15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

[1] *Heb.* the master of the tongue.
[2] *Heb.* grace.
[3] *Heb.* his mouth.
[4] *Heb.* multiplieth words.

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another, namely, that the reading was לפני, 'as before,' and, as was common with the ancient versions, inserts both the reading and its variant into the text. This conjectural change in the text will make all quite clear; the passage will then read thus—'If the iron be blunt, and so it is as to its edges whetted, and so too blows prevail, and so too an advantage is the success [due to an instance] of wisdom,' *i.e.* in this case a skilful hit. That is, if the axe be blunt, grinding, force, and skill together, will produce the required result. No doubt this can only be put forth as mere conjecture, but, in the absence of any satisfactory interpretation, may be admitted; for, in fact, arbitrary senses given to words, and the insertions of explanatory glosses not immediately deducible from the original, do amount to alterations of the text. None of the other ancient Greek versions have been preserved in this place, except a reading of Symmachus, which is very curious, showing still more forcibly how early the difficulty must have arisen, since it is at best a reading *ad sensum* only, προέχει δὲ ὁ γοργευσάμενος εἰς σόφιαν, 'and the nimble advances into wisdom.'

(11.) **If bites the serpent** (with the article, and therefore generic — serpents generally) **without** (בלוא; we may well suppose that the full form is used not without meaning; it occ. Isa. lv. 1, 2, in the sense of 'the absence of,' which well suits the context here,) **whispering** (occ. Isa. ii. 3, 20, and xxvi. 6; Jer. viii. 17, etc.), **and** there is **nothing** of **profit to the master of the tongue** (with article, hence generic. The rendering of the A. V. is derived from the Vulgate. The alliteration shows that the aphorism is equivocal, it is the converse of the former: skill will help force, but after the mischief is done skill is of no use. There is also here an ironical depreciation of serpent-charming).

(12.) **The words of** (in the usual sense of reasonings) **the mouth of a wise man, a favour** (*i.e.* are each one so), **but the lips of** the **foolish swallow him** (fut. piel, occ. 2 Sam. xx. 19, 20; Job viii. 18, in the sense of 'destroy;' hence the LXX. render καταποντίσουσιν; comp. Matt. xiv. 30, xviii. 6. Here too we have a singular verb with a plural noun—'any one of a fool's words may be his destruction.' Notice also the implied difference—'a fool talks with his *lips*, a wise man *reasons*).

(13.) **The beginning** of **words** (or reasonings) **of his mouth, elaborate follies** (סכלות in its usual sense; and the whole being without the article gives the meaning—'Each beginning of the reasonings of his mouth is one out of a number of elaborate follies; his reasonings are themselves elaborate mistakes'), **and an end** (אחרית is used to signify the last end, Numb. xxiii.

Each word of a wise man's mouth is grace, but the lips of a fool will swallow him apace.

The beginnings of *his* reasonings are each a wise error, and the result of what he says are disappointed expectations, every one of which is mischievous.

And the wise fool multiplies his reasons, though no man understands the present, and the future results no one can declare.

A toil of fools will weary them each one, who has altogether lost his way.

10; see chap. vii. 8) **of his mouth** (repeated, 'that same mouth') **disappointed expectations** (הוללות, in its usual sense in this book) **mischievous** (sing., each one of which is so).

(14.) **And the elaborate fool multiplies words, not knowing** (*i.e.* when there is *no* knowing by) **the man** (humanity generally) **what it is which will be** (but the Alexandrine and Vatican read apparently שהיה, *γενόμενον*, which A^2. E. X. alter to *γενησόμενον*, 'which shall be.' The Syriac supports the LXX., but Symmachus reads *τὰ προγενόμενα ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὰ ἐσόμενα* — 'the things which were before, but not those which come after'—which the Vulgate follows. Jerome, however, follows the LXX. against the Vulgate; nevertheless we should not be inclined to alter the text, but would rather regard the reading of the LXX. as *ad sensum*—the object being to give the difference between the contracted and full relative and the subjunctive meaning attaching to this form. Thus שיהיה is that which *is* or exists, the *τὸ ὄν*—'he does not know then the real state of things'—is the meaning; for with this agrees what follows), **and which** (full relative) **is** (or will be) **from after him** (but there is no reason why מאחריו should not be considered as a participial noun, as the LXX. make it, and then we must render the 'future' in the sense of what occurs in the future) **who tells to him** (emphatic). The meaning of the passage is—'That the elaborate fool multiplies reasonings, which are sure to have an evil tendency, as they are intended to promote his elaborate folly, although man generally neither understands the meaning of the present, nor can divine the future.' The difficulty of the sentence arises from the play between מה־שיהיה and מאחריו.

(15.) **The toil** (*i.e.* 'anxious care,' which is the meaning of this word) **of the foolish ones wearies him** (another distributive plural; the result of these various fools' labour is weariness to each of them. It is also to be noticed that the verb is feminine, and yet עמל is usually masculine. Several nouns are, Stuart observes, masculine or feminine *ad libitum scriptoris*. There is however, we suspect, a perceptible difference in the meaning in these cases. The stricter agreement denotes closer union between the verb and its nominative; and if this be so, the idea of the passage may be rendered by 'the toil of the fools is self-weariness'), **which** (full relative, equivalent therefore to 'because' he does) **not know** (or is instructed) **to** (in order to) **go towards** (אל, LXX. *εἰς*) **a city** (not *the* city, as is usually rendered.) The obvious meaning would surely be, that the fool had lost his way, and hence as he is going wrong he has simply his trouble for his pains.

16 ¶ Woe to thee, O land, when thy king *is* a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!

17 Blessed *art* thou, O land, when thy king *is* the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

18 ¶ By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

19 ¶ A feast is made for laughter, and wine [1]maketh merry: but money answereth all *things*.

20 ¶ Curse not the king, no not in thy [2]thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

CHAPTER XI.

CAST thy bread [3]upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

[1] *Heb.* maketh glad the life.
[2] *Or*, conscience.
[3] *Heb.* upon the face of the waters.

(16.) **Woe to thee, land, whose king** is **a lad, and thy princes in the morning eat** (*i.e.* 'feast,' the morning being the proper time for work, and not for feasting. Comp. Isa. v. 11).

(17.) **Blessings on thee, land, whose king** is **a son of nobles** (ἐλευθέρου, LXX.), **and thy princes in season eat, and not in drunkenness** (but the LXX. render καὶ οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσονται—'and shall not be ashamed'—reading the בִּשְׁתִּי as though the ב were radical, and deriving the word from בּוּשׁ, 'to be ashamed.' Thus is probably preserved an intentional equivoke.)

(18.) **By idlenesses** (Prov. xix. 15 only; but עַצֵל, 'the sluggard,' occurs continually in Proverbs, and once as a v., Jud. xviii. 9. The word is pointed as a dual, but the meaning 'idlenesses' suits the context) **decayeth** (מָכַךְ, occ. Kal, Ps. cvi. 43, niphal here, and hiphil Job xxiv. 24, *all*) **the beam** (הַמְּקֶרֶה here only, but the word differs only in pointing from הַמִּקְרֶה—the hap, and the equivoke could hardly be unintentional), **and in lowness of hands drops** (occ. Job xvi. 20, Ps. cxix. 28; but notice the readings of the LXX., which are peculiar) **the house.**

(19.) **To laughter** are **makings** (which the LXX. renders by ποιοῦσιν, 'they make') **bread and wine rejoices** (the Masorets consider this a piel and transitive) **lives, and the silver** (with the article, and therefore generic—money) **answereth with respect to all things** (both senses of יַעֲנֶה are given in the versions of the LXX. ἐπακούσεται, Alexandrine, 'humbly obeys,' and ταπεινώσει, Vatican, 'will humble.' The Alexandrine also reads σὺν τὰ πάντα. The Syriac reads also double, as do some copies of the LXX.—ܘܟܣܦܐ ܡܫܬܥܒܕ ܠܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܘܟܣܦܐ ܡܫܬܥܒܕ ܠܟܠ ܡܕܡ—'and money

Ah! woe to thee, O country, whose king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.

Blessed art thou, O country, whose king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness.

When they are idle, there is a slender support, and when both hands hang down, the roof-tree will weep.

For pleasure they make bread, and wine rejoices life, but silver subserves with respect to everything.

Also, even in thy conscience a king do not revile, and in secret places of the bed-chamber neither do thou revile the rich: for a bird of the heavens will carry out the rumour, and the swift one on wings shall tell the matter.

CAST thy bread on the face of the waters: for in the multitude of the days—thou wilt find it.

Give a share all round, and to some one else beside, for thou dost not know what sort of mischief shall be in the earth.

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oppresses and leads them astray in all.' The Alexandrine reading, however, makes quite consistent sense, and squares entirely with the rest of the passage. Bread is prepared for pleasure rather than support, wine rejoices hearts already merry—its real use is to cheer those who are faint with toil or sorrow; and silver, which one can neither eat nor drink, is preferred to bread and wine and everything else).

(20.) **Also in thy understanding** (occ. Dan. i. 4, 17; 2 Chron. i. 10, 11, 12 only, and always with this meaning: all the ancient Vv. follow the idea contained in the LXX.'s *συνείδησις*, which would seem to give the notion that this curse was a reasonable, not a hasty one) **a king** (not the king, any king) **do not curse**; **and in the innermost** of **thy bed-chambers do not** either **curse the rich** person (the idea of cursing or reviling is of course here prominent), **for a bird of the heavens shall cause to convey the voice** (with אֵת and the article, with 'respect to that voice' is the meaning—the rumour will get abroad in a mysterious way) **and a lord of the winged ones** (the Masorets wish to omit the article in הַכְּנָפַיִם) **shall tell the matter** (the LXX. note the emphasis given by הוּא and the articles by adding the pronoun *σοῦ*, which is simply a rendering *ad sensum*—'Treason, like murder, will out').

XI. (1.) **Cast thy bread upon the face of the waters, for in the multitude of the days thou shalt find it.** (This passage is usually taken as an exhortation to liberality. Hengstenberg however understands it to refer to ships and their cargo of grain. Zökler refers to Prov. xi. 24 for a similar sentiment, and Luke xvi. 9; the idea is clearly that of an unexpected return).

(2.) **Give a portion to seven, and also to eight** (see Job v. 19, Micah v. 4 (5), for similar idioms; it is equivalent to our

3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

5 As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether [1]shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good.

7 ¶ Truly the light *is* sweet, and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes to behold the sun:

8 But if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity.

[1] *Heb.* shall be right.

'everybody, and some one else'), **for not dost thou know what shall be mischief upon the earth.**

(3.) **If they are full the clouds** (עָב is the thick vapour that appears and disappears) **rain** (גֶּשֶׁם is the storm rain which does mischief or good according to circumstances, see chap. xii. 2) **they cause to empty** (clouds do not always prognosticate rain; and even if they should, a storm may do mischief rather than good); **and if is falling a tree in the south**, or **if** either **in the north** ('*if*' is hence emphatic) **the place where** may **fall** (contracted relative) **the tree** (now with the article, for it is the falling tree spoken of above) **there it will be** (the unusual form יִהְוֶא has troubled the commentators much: Moses Stuart pronounces the א to be otiose, which is not explaining the form at all. But may not the following be a sufficient explanation?—הָוָא in this book is used in the sense of the existence of an object: might not Koheleth coin a verb by adding the י of the present tense, with the idea, 'makes itself be'?—comp. also Josh. x. 24, Isa. xxiii. 12, where this otiose א occurs; the rendering of the LXX. by ἔσται shows how they understood it, and so also the Syriac and Vulgate. The whole sentence is ironical, when the tree has really fallen, then we know which way it fell. The Masoretic accentuation of this passage is peculiar—we should naturally have expected them to have divided the verse into two clauses, at יִרְיקוּ, 'they empty,' instead of which the greatest pause occurs at 'north' בַּצָּפוֹן, but this method of reading renders the irony of the passage; the verse will then stand thus:—'If the clouds are full of rain they will empty themselves upon the earth, and so if the tree should incline to the south, or if it should incline to the north—the place where it falls is where it really will *be*.' The accentuation is rhetorical rather than logical, and the Masorets have shown great taste in their pointing).

(4.) **Regarding wind! not does** one **sow** (impersonal), **and looking into clouds neither is one reaping** (we must attend to the precise form of the words in this sentence in order to gather the true nature of the sarcasm hidden in it; the LXX. have clearly marked these forms in their rendering).

(5.) **As thou art not one who knows what is the way of the spirit, like the**

If the clouds are FULL of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if falls the tree by the south [wind] or by the north—the place where the tree *falls* is just where it will be.

Looking at the wind one does not sow, and gazing into the clouds one does not reap.

Just as thou art not one who knows the way of the spirit, how the bones are in the womb of the pregnant: just so thou knowest nothing with respect to the working of the Almighty, who is working out the whole.

In the morning sow the seed thou oughtest, and to the evening do not withhold thy hand, for THOU canst not tell if it shall succeed, whether this or another, or if all of it shall be alike good.

Yes, sweet is the light, and a good to the eyes the sight of the sun; yet if man lives to the very longest limit of his days, in all of them he may rejoice, and remember with respect to the days of darkness that they shall be many too: all that is coming is evanescent.

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bones in the womb of the pregnant, just so, thou dost not know, with respect to the working of the Deity, Who is He that (full relative) **performs with regard to the whole.** (The LXX. render the first part ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἔστιν γινώσκων, 'among whom none knows,' taking no notice of the pronoun *thou*. Did they read the כ at the end of אינך as beginning the following word? That the sentence is equivocal, and that this equivoke helps the general drift of the passage is not to be doubted.) The subject now returns to the previous train of argument, which directs man to do his duty in submission to the inscrutable ways of Providence.

(6.) **In the morning sow thy seed** (with את, 'sow that seed which you ought to sow,') **and to the evening** (note the change of preposition, it renders this passage a better introduction to what is to follow: there is a reference to the evening of life) **do not withhold thy hand** (comp. chap. vii. 18, where את is used with this verb, and observe the difference in meaning), **for it is not thou who knowest** (a repetition of this clause from the preceding verse) **whether** (but comp. 1 Kings xxii. 24, and 1 Sam. ix. 18, showing that the meaning with זה is 'what way' or 'how,') **succeeds** (see chap. x. 10 and refs.) **the this or this, or if both of them as one** (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό 'to the same,' LXX.) **good** (pl.; sowing is no doubt taken generically as a type of human labour, performed in expectation of a future harvest, and the Preacher directs us to do our appointed work in patience, and from morning till evening, *i.e.* the whole day through, sure of a good result. The morning or the evening sowing will, one or other, perhaps both, succeed; the transition to what follows is quite natural).

(7.) **And sweet** (but the participial form 'sweetened' is not to be altogether overlooked; thus, 'is sweetened') **the light, and a good to the eyes to behold** (*i.e.* to have sight of) **the sun,** (for life *is* a blessing, and this is a reply to the equivocal 'I said in my heart' of chap. iii. 18 and iv. 3.

(8.) **For if the years are many** (that is, if his years are as long as they can be) **the man** (humanity generally) **in all of them rejoices** (but as the noun stands before the verb, it is emphatic, and in this case, as the verb is preceded by בכלם, is potential—'may rejoice'), **and remembers with re-**

9 ¶ Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these *things* God will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove [1]sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth *are* vanity.

CHAPTER XII.

REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders [2]cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

[1] *Or*, anger. [2] *Or*, fail because they *grind* little.

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gard to days of darkness (that is, forgetfulness, the days when he is forgotten, and also of sorrow or sadness, for both meanings are combined) **for the many** (repeating the above, with the sense, then, 'for very many also,') **will they be, all which may come** ('every coming event' that is, as the contracted relative shows) **is vanity** (evanescent).

(9.) **Rejoice, young man** (but בחר has the sense of '*choice*,' and this is to be remembered here) **in thy youth** (but ילדות occurs here only; see however Ps. cx. 3, which the Masorets point יַלְדֻתֶךָ; this word is the abstract of the word ילד, which means 'to beget;' hence the exact meaning of ילדות would be 'productions'), **and cause good to thee** let **thy heart in days of thy choosings** (for בחורות also occurs only here and chap. xii. 1, and youth therefore is so designated, because it is a time of choice), **and walk in ways of thy heart, and seeings of thine eyes; and know how, upon all these, thou art caused to come of the Deity into judgment.** (The LXX. have here the gloss ἄμωμος—'in the ways of thine heart *blameless*;' but the Syriac Hexaplar notes this gloss with an asterisk, so that it is clearly not entitled to any weight; it was no doubt a subsequent addition to the text, because the meaning was not seen, as indeed it cannot be, without a reference to the double meanings of the Hebrew words.

(10.) **And put away disappointment** (כעס, chap. i. 18, refs.) **from thy heart, and pass away evil from thy flesh; because the producings and the dawnings** (שחרות occurs here only; for the meaning of the root see Job vii. 21, Ps. lxxviii. 34, Prov. xiii. 24. So the meaning of the word here is 'early seekings,' which the LXX. render *ad sensum* by ἡ ἄνοια, 'the ignorance;' and the Syriac by ܛܥܘܬܐ ‏ ‏ ‏

Rejoice, O choice young man, in the days of thy youth, and let thy heart do thee good in the choice days of thy youth, and walk in ways of thy heart and sights of thine eyes, and know how, on account of all these things thou shalt be summoned of the Almighty to judgment. Put away disappointment from thine heart, and purge away mischief from thy flesh, for childhood and early expectations are evanescent. But remember thy Creator in the days of thy choice youth, while these evil days come not, and these years approach, of which thou shalt say there is nothing for me in THEM of happy providence; before, too, is darkened the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars; and the storm-cloud returns after the tempest. In a day when sore moved are the keepers of the house, and the mighty mortals sadly perplex themselves, and the grinding maids are idle because there is little to grind, and the ladies look into gloom through the windows; and closed are the doors in the street in the failing sound of the mill, and one starts at the note of a sparrow, and hushed are all the daughters of song. Moreover, the

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expression will preserve an equivoke similar to that in the text—*conception;* but this time is evanescent. We choose our path in life when young, but then we cannot go back. He who changes his calling once rarely succeeds in it, and never if he chooses twice.

XII. (1.) **And remember with respect to thy Creators** (but בוֹרְאֶ is 'creating'—see Isa. xl. 28, xli. 5, xlv. 7, 18, where the participle poel occurs; hence, according to the strict meaning, it ought to be *thy creatings*) **in days of thy choosings** (with the same meaning as before; the sentence is doubtless intentionally equivocal) **until not come days of the evil** ('the evil days' is quite correct, but then we must remember the emphasis falls on 'evil,' not 'days'), **and are caused to draw near years** (not 'the years,' which spoils the pathos of the passage—years are opposed to days above) **which thou sayest there is nothing to me** (emphatic) **in them of delight** (but not without a shade of the technical meaning, 'providence'—as man grows older he *expects* no delight; no great good fortune can come to him).

(2.) **Until not darkened** (*i.e.* before this happens) **is the sun,** and **the light** (referring back to chap. xi. 7), **and the moon, and the stars, and return the clouds** (*storm*-clouds) **after the rain** (the tempestuous rain, *i.e.* storm succeeds storm).

(3.) **In a day** (not *the* day, which again spoils the pathos. Koheleth is now going to give specimens of evil days) **when disturbed are,** (occ. only Est. iii. 9, and Hab. ii. 7, pilpel. This word, שִׁיזְעוּ, has been said to be a late one, but זְעוּהּ occ. Deut. xxviii. 5; the idea is 'commotion,' when they are or may be in commotion) **the keepers of the house, and perplex themselves** (see chap. i. 15, vii. 13), **the men** (אֲנוֹשֵׁי, 'weak men') **of the strength** (it is quite consistent with the character of the writer to join such terms as these together, with an oblique sarcasm hidden beneath them), **and cease** (here only, a so-called late word) **the grinding maids, because they are diminished, and are dark the gazers** (fem.) **in the windows** ((1.) the keepers are the slaves; (2.) the strong men the masters; (3.) the grinding

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;

5 Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

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maids the women servants; (4.) the gazers are the ladies—comp. Judg. v. 28; thus is comprised the whole family.)

(4.) **And shut are the doors in the street, in the failing voice of the grinding,** (or 'grinding maid'), **and rises up** (as there is no nom. we must take it as impersonal, 'one rises up') **to a voice of the sparrow, and brought low** (see Isa. ii. 9, and also xxix. 4, where the word is used of a muttering voice) **all daughters of the song.**

(5.) **Moreover** (this marks a transition in the catalogue of ills, the former were external evils—these come from within) **also from the height they fear; and terrors in the way; and the almond is despised; and burdens itself the grasshopper; and scattered the desire.** (This passage has exercised translators and commentators from the earliest times. The LXX. read—*καίγε ἀπὸ ὕψους ὄψονται, καὶ θάμβοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, καὶ ἀνθήσει τὸ ἀμύγδαλον, καὶ παχυνθῇ ἡ ἀκρὶς, καὶ διασκεδασθῇ ἡ καππάρις*—'and they shall look from the height, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the locust shall increase, and the caper berry shall be scattered.' Here B. read *εἰς τὸ ὕψος*, 'into the height.' Aquila, *τρόμῳ τρομήσουσιν*, 'they shall tremble a trembling;' and *καὶ καρπεύσει ἡ καππάρις*, 'the caper-berry shall fructify.' Now Symmachus, quoted by Jerome, read—'Super hæc etiam de eccelso videbunt, et error erit in via, et obdormiet vigilans, et dissolvetur spiritus fortitudo.' The last words are, however, preserved in Greek—*καὶ διαλυθῇ ἡ ἐπίπονος.* 'On these they look from the height, and error will be in the way, and the watchful will fall asleep, and the courage of the spirit will be dissolved.' The Syriac reads—ܘܡܢ ܡܪܡ ܢܚܫܘܢ ܘܐܝܡܘܬܐ ܒܐܘܪܚܐ ܘܬܫܠܝܚ ܠܘܙܐ ܘܬܬܒܣܡ ܒܨܦܪܐ ܘܬܬܦܫܚ ܐܒܝܢܬܐ ܘܬܬܒܛܠ ܫܘܩܕܐ—'and also from the height they fear, and shall be terrified in the way, and the watch shall rush upon him, and the almond flourish, and the grasshopper be increased, and the caper shall burst, and desire shall cease.' We think that, with these different versions before us, all of which have preserved portions of the original, we shall be able to conjecture the meaning of the text. It is just possible that originally the text read מגביה, and which might have been altered by displacing the ו, and putting it on to the beginning of the next word; for otherwise it is hard to suppose that the LXX. would go out of their way to alter a reading the meaning of which, as it stands, is so obvious. B. seems to have preserved this original reading. The difference to the sense, however, is not great, as this looking upwards is evidently the effect of fear, as is shown by the next clause. This begins with the word והתחתים—a reduplicated and therefore emphasized form of חתת, to 'be dismayed,' or 'distracted,' as in the sense of 'broken in pieces;' hence the rendering of Aquila: 'These intense tremblings in the way'—which word 'way' surely we may interpret in the ethical sense so common in this book of 'way of life'—are the natural result of 'looking with fearfulness into the height.' Comp. chap. iii. 21.

The next clause is still more obscure. The word ינאץ has, in all other places,

height is dreaded, and great fears are in the way, and the almond tree [the harbinger of spring] is despised, and the little grasshopper [of summer] is as a burden, and desire itself has fled, for man has departed to his long home, and mourners go round the market: or ever the silver line runs out, or the golden oil bowl is removed, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or wheel runs down at the well, or the dust returns to the earth where it was, or the spirit

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the meaning 'to be despised,' or, in piel, to 'provoke.' The hiphil occ. here only, and is rendered, contrary to all analogy, 'flourish.' This is virtually to alter the text; and though the LXX. support this rendering, it is clear, from its various readings, that the Greek text has also been tampered with. The original meaning has apparently been preserved by Symmachus, and by the alternative rendering of the Syriac. Then as to 'the almond tree,' השקד: the word occ. Gen. xliii. 11, Numb. xvii. 8 (23), Jer. i. 11, *all.* This last passage gives probably the clue. The almond is the first tree to blossom in the coming spring, and is its harbinger; it is, as it were, in a hurry to welcome it; but this harbinger of spring is despised. As to the interpretation that the almond blossom is an allegorical description of the white hairs of an old man, it may be answered that the almond blossom is pink, not white.

The next clause—'The grasshopper shall be a burden'—may be explained by noticing that the word חגב occ. Numb. xiii. 33, Isa. xl. 22, as the type of something small or insignificant. The only other two places, viz. Lev. xi. 22, 2 Chron. vii. 13, where the word occurs, show that this creature was edible, but might become a plague. יסתבל, the hithpael of סבל, occurs here only; 'burdens itself' is the exact meaning. The English Version no doubt gives here the true sense.

The next clause—'Desire shall fail'—may be explained in the same way. The word תפר, the hiphil of פרר, has always the meaning to 'break,' 'disannul'—see Numb. xxx. 13, Job xv. 4, and hophal, Zech. xi. 11. Evidently Symmachus, with the reading *διαλυθῇ ἡ ἐπίπονος*, has preserved the true meaning; for by *ἐπίπονος* he has rendered the word אביונה, which occ. here only. Now we have no right to seek a strange signification for this word when fair sense can be made according to the ordinary derivations. אביון occ. frequently in the sense of 'a poor person'—the root being אבה, 'to wish,' or 'desire.' Jerome translates, as we see—'Et dissolvetur spiritus fortitudinis'—'the spirit or breath of the brave is dissolved,' which is *ad sensum;* so that we may take אביונה as simply an abstract of אביון, with the meaning of 'wishfulness,' or 'longing.' Thus the reading of the LXX. is explained: Capers are provocatives of desire or appetite, and hence their Hebrew name. The *ἐπίπονος* of Symmachus occurs only once again, at Isa. liii. 3, where it represents the Hebrew מכאבות, 'griefs' (see Field's most instructive note, Hexaplar *in loc.*). Thus we venture to offer the following as a probable explanation of this passage:—'Besides, they look with dread on high, and great dismay is in the way, and the almond tree (as a symbol of anticipation) is despised, and the grasshopper (as a symbol of what is small and light) is burdensome, and the caper-berries (as the symbol of desires or longings) are scattered.' In the last clause the metaphorical out-tops the literal meaning, as the A. V. renders, rightly abandoning the LXX. at this point.) **For** (or 'so') **advances** (הלך, recalling chap. i.) **the man** (in the ordinary technical meaning of humanity) **to** ('towards,' LXX. *εἰς*, in its primary sense of motion to a place) **a house of his age** (עלמו, having its ordinary sense of 'the age,' or *αἰὼν*, as the LXX. render. The A. V.'s 'long home' is a beautiful paraphrase: his 'brief home' is his *house;* his

6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

8 ¶ Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all *is* vanity.

9 And [1]moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs.

10 The Preacher sought to find out [2]acceptable words: and *that which was* written *was* upright, *even* words of truth.

[1] *Or*, the more wise the Preacher was. [2] *Heb.* words of delight.

'long home' his *tomb*), **and go round in the street** (which the LXX. render ἐν ἀγορᾷ, 'in the market') **the mourners** (those who mourn for the dead).

(6.) **Until not** (marking another break in the comparison) **is loosed** (according to the Kri, but this is only a conjecture of the Masorets; if correct, the niphal occurs here only, but the chetib, ירחק, means 'to be far from;' and thus the LXX. render by ἀνατραπῇ, 'turned back,' and this appears to be correct) **a cord of the silver** (the Hebrew idiom for our 'the *silver* cord.' If we understand this to mean the silver cord from which the lamp is suspended, we shall perceive the allusion), **and is broken** (תרץ, so far as the unpointed text is concerned, might be fem. third fut. Kal of רוץ, 'to run'—see Gen. xxix. 12. The LXX. render by συνθλιβῇ, which occ. Sir. xxxi. 14 only; but it also may be from רצץ—see Judg. ix. 53. B. reads συντριβῇ; but this is an error, the origin of which is the similarity of the two words and the occurrence of them both in the same sentence), **a bowl** (גלת, used by Zechariah to denote the reservoir which contained the oil for the gŏlden candlestick of the temple, Zech. iv. 2, 3. The LXX. render ἀνθέμιον, which also occ. Exod. xxxviii. 16, 'for the round ornaments;' comp. also Jos. xv. 19, Judg. i. 15, where the word evidently signifies a reservoir for irrigation; גלה also occ. 1 Kings vii. 41, etc. If the 'golden bowl of the lamp' be taken as the most probable meaning, it will admirably suit the context), **of the gold** (the idea then is apparently that of a golden lamp bowl suspended by a silver cord; the lamp would be let down daily at least; the golden bowl would then run down and be taken away to be replenished); **and is shivered** (see Lev. vi. 28 (21)) **a pitcher upon** (or over) **the spring** (occ. Isa. xxxv. 7, xlix. 10, and is evidently a spring gushing out of the ground, as opposed to בור, which is a sunken well or cistern), **and is run** (but the word is niphal, and the LXX. render συντροχάσῃ, 'run down to') **the wheel** (with the article, because the special wheel is meant which stands over the cistern) **towards** (אל, the preposition is different) **the well; and returns the dust upon the earth as it was, and the spirit is returning** (both futures, but one written full, the other contracted; there is perhaps a slight distinction—one also follows, the other goes before, its verb) **to** (אל; LXX. πρὸς) **the Deity who** (but full relative, as compared with the contracted form above) **gave it** (fem., to agree with רוח; but, as we have so often seen, this close agreement gives a peculiar meaning; it is especially the divine *gift*).

(8.) **Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher** (with the article, the Preacher as such, generic), **the whole is vanity.**

We must notice, in interpreting these last verses that the acts described are all such as take time, indeed but a short time, to accomplish, and occur frequently. The string of the lamp will be loosed almost

is returning to the Almighty, its giver; so—evanescence of evanescence, says the Preacher, the whole is evanescent.

Section V.—*Epilogue.*

But there is something yet to come: for the Preacher *was* wise; he yet taught knowledge with respect to men generally; and, pondering, he tracked out the solution of [these] enigmas to the utmost. The Preacher, indeed, sought to discover the reasons for a providence, but what he *has* written is the real matter of truth. These reasons of the wise are like goads, but they are like stakes as well, deeply

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daily, and the lamp taken away; and surely no more poetical or impressive metaphor of death can be discovered than a lamp with oil-bowl gone. Next we have the shattered pitcher—an accident which may happen at any time; and then the bucket running down into the well, which is a comparatively frequent occurrence, and may well bring vividly before our minds the disappearance of one who was just before familiarly among us. That the bucket might be drawn up again full of living water is necessarily not mentioned, but is one of those hidden sarcastic promises in which the book delights. The last two clauses are joined together by the simple 'and;' but there is clearly at this point a transition from simile to metaphor, which the A. V. notices. If indeed one likes to take it so, the simile is true enough of dust and wind, but the last clause discloses a deeper meaning. After all, the promises of a resurrection are but scarcely hidden behind the apparent hopelessness of the conclusion arrived at.

The interpretation which makes the whole of this passage a metaphorical description of old age, comes from no more authoritative source than Hagadic interpretation, as embodied in the Chaldee Targum. There is no proof that any allegory was intended, and the literal meaning is not only to the purpose, but exceedingly touching and beautiful. The arrangement of clauses, also, is highly artificial, which may be seen by counting them as marked off by the recurring forms 'or ever,' 'also,' and the like.

(9.) **And for the rest** (for now is to be added something over and above, to form a supplement to what went before; comp. 1 Kings xiv. 19 both for the Hebrew and Greek. As the word יֹתֵר stands first, it is the subject: whether we point it as noun or participle will not make much difference to the sense, but the Masoretic pointing is best; they also, with great taste, put a large distinctive accent on the word. The meaning is, 'there is something yet to be added;') **that he was** (the contract-relative with sub. verb) even a **Koheleth** (*i.e.* a preacher or gatherer) who was **wise, yet** (the LXX. render καὶ ὅτι, 'nevertheless,' but their rendering is very remarkable and we will discuss it at length presently) **taught knowledge** (and in the sense so common in this book, of the knowledge how to act under a given set of circumstances) **with respect to the people** (not as usually understood that he taught the people knowledge, but taught knowledge with regard to the people, the *collected* body of humanity; comp. chap. iv. 16) **and he gave heed, and he sought out** (Deut. xiii. 4; Ps. cxxxix. 1) **an order** (chap. i. 15, viii. 18; this is the third time of occurrence of this root, which is peculiar to this book. The Masorets point as piel pret., it might however be a noun, as the LXX. render it, and we shall see reason presently for adopting this interpretation) **of parables the many.**

(10.) **Sought Koheleth to find words of providence** (דבר and חפץ, both in their

11 The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd.

12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much [1]study *is* a weariness of the flesh.

[1] *Or*, reading.

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usual technical senses) **and written** (full participial form) **uprightness, words of truth.** (The passage is very obscure; the LXX. render *καὶ περισσὸν ὅτι ἐγένετο ὁ ἐκκλησιαστὴς σοφὸς* [*καὶ*] *ὅτι ἐδίδαξεν γνῶσιν σὺν τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ οὓς ἐξιχνιάσεται κόσμιον παραβολῶν.* Πολλὰ, *κ.τ.λ.* 'and for the rest, because the Preacher was wise, and because he taught knowledge with respect to the man, and his ear will trace out the orderly arrangement of parables.' Now, some curious features in this rendering deserve notice—the word *κόσμιον* occ. 1 Tim. ii. 9, and iii. 2; it is used as a neuter, 'orderliness.' Again, את העם is rendered *σὺν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.* B. omits and A^3 includes in brackets the *καὶ*, so marked, in the text; A^2 reads *ἔτι*; F.X. omit *σὺν*; F. reads (for *ἄνθρ.*) *λαὸν*; E. *ἐξιχνίασε*; and D. *κόσμον.* Thus it appears probable that the LXX. read יחקר, and as this future follows the past, we have the sense of the imperfect: they also translated *σὺν τὸν ἄνθρωπον*, because they considered העם as used generically—see chap. iv. 16, and in the same sense. If, however, the Hebrew text were altered, which would be done simply by lengthening the jud י into vau ו, the rendering of the LXX. would become unintelligible, and hence the variations, especially that of E. Then אזן, which is really nom. to יחקר, and emphatic as standing before it, came to be regarded as a verb and pointed piel, the only instance of such pointing that occurs, and then accenting וחקר with zakeph, the Masorets made these two words a parenthesis, and pointed תקן as a piel pret., instead of a noun as do the LXX.; they then make הרבה sing. agree with the pl. משלים, which would, according to the usage of this book, be distributive. On the whole, however, it seems very probable that the LXX. have preserved the right reading, or at least the meaning of the passage; this meaning is, 'and for the rest, because Koheleth *was* a wise man, still he taught knowledge with respect to the people, and his ear [*i.e.* judgment, for the word contains the idea of weighing as in a balance] was seeking out an orderly meaning [or solution] of parables;' by parables he means doubtless the mysterious facts cited. The next verse takes this thought up thus: 'Very much sought Koheleth in order to find words of providence—and written correctly words of truth.' If the reading were really וכתוב, and not, as we may conjecture, יכתוב, we should then read 'he was writing,' which it must be confessed makes excellent sense. The LXX. render here [*καὶ*] *γεγραμμένον εὐθύτητος λόγους ἀληθείας*, in the accusative, governed by *ἐζητήσεν*, and the meaning is therefore, 'sought . . . a thing written of right [even] words of truth.' This agrees altogether with the context, and also is cognate with what follows).

(11.) **The words of** (but as דברי is repeated, we have 'those words of') **wise men as goads** (דברי חכמים כדרבנות; the play is manifest between דבר and דרב, but דרבנות occurs here only, note also its two accents, and the noun in a concrete form at 1 Sam. xiii. 21) **and as nails** (the particle of comparison being repeated, gives the idea 'but as nails as well,' but מַשְׂמְרוֹת, spelt with the letter sin, occurs here only; only one instance of a piel part. of the very common verb שמר occurs, viz. Jon. ii. 8 (9), but the noun משמר is also quite common; see 1 Chron. ix. 23, where לְמִשְׁמָרוֹת occurs in the sense of 'by wards') **planted masters of assemblies** (אסֻפה, occ. as a fem. noun Isaiah xxiv. 22; LXX. *συναγωγὴν*. This word has a curious history, which will further

fixed, dominating over the herd, appointed so by a shepherd, who is the only one. But as to anything else from these, my son, be warned: making of many treatises would lead to no result, and much study would but weary the body.

The end of the matter, even all that hath been heard, is

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illustrate its meaning at this place. The reading of the Hexapla at Isa. xxiv. 22 is: Ο'. *καὶ συνάξουσι* Χ *συναγωγὴν αὐτῆς* Χ *εἰς δεσμωτήριον καὶ ἀποκλείσουσιν εἰς ὀχύρωμα.* Σ. *καὶ ἀθροισθήσονται ἀθροισμὸν δεσμίου καὶ συγκλεισθήσονται εἰς συγκλεισμόν*, showing a difficulty about the word which in the Hexapla is included between asterisks. Here the Peshito renders Koheleth by ܟܢܝ̈ ‘masters of thresholds,’ and uses this same word at Ex. xii. 22, 23, and Deut. vi. 9; hence they understood the allusion to be to the stake set across the entrance of the fold to prevent the cattle from straying out. That this reading will explain Isa. xxiv. 22 is evident enough, and that it will explain this passage also will be seen if we look upon these goads as both compelling the oxen to labour, and, as the Syriac renders, forming the stakes which close the entrance to the lair); **are given from a shepherd, one only** (notice that אחד stands emphatically at the end of the sentence, and must mean, therefore, ‘the shepherd, who is the only one.’ This verse has greatly perplexed commentators: a diligent perusal of the ancient versions, and following the hint given by the Syriac above, will show us what is the real meaning. The LXX. read *πεπυρωμένοι* A[1]. D. E. X., which A[2]. B alter to *πεφυτευμένοι*, and which Aquila follows; probably *πεπυρωμένοι* was a misreading of *πεπαρμένοι*, from *πάρω*, ‘to infix;’ Symmachus reads *πεπηγότες* ‘constructed on,’ see Heb. viii. 2. All the ancient Greek versions consider בעלי as a preposition, and render by *παρὰ τῶν*; the LXX. render אספות by *συναγμάτων*; B. *συνθεμάτων*; Aquila *συνταγμάτων*; Syriac Hexapla ܡܢ ܟܢܫ̈ܐ; Symmachus *συναχθέντων*, otherwise *συναντημάτων*; Syriac ܡܢ ܟܢܫ̈ܐ ܕ, all which words have nearly the same meaning. The Syriac also gives here, from Theodotion, what is possibly a rendering of this place, but may be intended for *παρεωραμένω*, in v. 14, ܡܢ ܟܢܫ̈ܐ ܕ, *i.e.* *ἀδρατα*, ‘unseen things.’ The Peshito rendering, perhaps, may give us the clue—these ‘collections’ or ‘collectanea’ are the instances of human life adduced by Koheleth, and it is men (like a herd of oxen driven by goads, and confined by stakes) over which these wise words are masters; and this we think will make all clear. The meaning of the passage will be: ‘These words of wise men are like goads, by which the ox is incited to labour, but then they are like stakes [*i.e.* to which the ox may be tied, or, of which a fence might be made to confine him] as well, planted around the persons brought together, [or the herd, and so infixed as masters of the assembly]; they are given from the shepherd [or herdsman’—for the word has both senses]—‘who is the only one;’ or, since מֵרֹעֶה is ambiguous, and pointed מִרְעֶה means ‘pasture,’ they give pasture only. Thus the metaphor is kept up and the equivoke maintained).

(12.) **But for the rest** (repeating the formula of ver. 9, and hence a further extension of the same idea), **from them** (emphatic, ‘but for anything else that these wise words can do’ is the meaning) **my son, be admonished: makings** of **books** (ספרים used for the sake of the alliteration with אספות above) **the many** (*i.e.* too many) **is nothing of an end** (*i.e.* gives no result) **and study** (להג occurs here only, LXX. *μελέτη*) **the much** (too much) **wearies** (comp. chap. i. 8) **the flesh.** (Thus even wisdom itself is no cure for the ills of humanity. The catalogue of human

13 ¶ [1]Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

[1] *Or*, The end of the matter, *even* all that hath been heard, *is*.

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ills and the instances of human evanescence would form too large a volume for humanity to master, so that in this case also the world itself would not contain the books which should be written. The grand result of all however is easily obtained, and follows.)

(13.) **The conclusion** (comp. chap. iii. 11, vii. 2) of the **word** (*i.e.* the final reason), **the whole** (with article in its usual sense), **is heard** (niphal), **with respect to the Deity, fear**; **and with respect to his commandments, keep** (notice the emphatic אֵת, which, however, the LXX. do not render by σὺν, because the article and position give the emphasis required) **for this is all the**

this: WITH REGARD TO THE ALMIGHTY, FEAR HIM; AND WITH REGARD ALSO TO HIS COMMANDMENTS, KEEP THEM, FOR THIS IS EVERYTHING TO HUMANITY. For with respect to every act, the Almighty will bring to adjustment all that is mysterious, whether it be a good or an evil.

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man (*i.e.* the whole duty, happiness, etc., of humanity).

(14.) **For with respect to all working** (or doings, notice the prefixed מ) **the Deity** (noun before the verb) **is bringing into judgment upon all the hidden** (niphal part., but עלם has not lost its meaning, it is the hidden past and future, hence the LXX. *παρεωραμένῳ*, 'overlooked,' comp. 1 Kings x. 3), **if it be good or if evil** (if it be a good act or an evil one either. That is, God will bring all these mysteries into orderly adjustment, and in the sequel vindicate his holiness and justice).

Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία.—LUKE ii. 14.

ERRATA.

P. 7, Notes, col. 2 line 14, *for* 'hiph.' *read* 'niphal.'
P. 19, Text, line 10, *for* 'he' *read* 'He.'
P. 31, Notes, col. 2, line 6, *for* 'ratio' *read* 'oratio.'

ADDENDA.

P. 9, Notes. *At end of Note on v.* 17, *after* 'spirit,' *add:* It may be observed that רעיון occurs in the Chaldee of Daniel—see Dan. ii. 29, 30; iv. 19 (16); v. 6, etc., always in the sense of a '*painful* reflection,' but in later Chaldee and Syriac as 'a reflection' of any kind. As the sense in which Koheleth uses the word is the nearest to the root-meaning, is it not an evidence, so far, of earlier composition of his book?

P. 12, Notes. *At end of Note on v.* 5 *add:* It should have been mentioned that פרדס is also considered to afford an indication of late composition. It is said to be a Persian word; it occurs, however, Neh. ii. 8; Cant. iv. 10. The word admits of Semitic derivation, from פרר, 'to divide,' 'cut off in portions,' 'lay out.' If it be really an exotic, no date of introduction is more probable than that of Solomon. It is also to be noted that in the context it *follows* the word 'gardens,' which is quite natural if it were intended to denote a foreign luxury recently introduced.

P. 15, Notes. *At end of Note on v.* 12 *add:* This most obscure passage may perhaps receive some light from a further discussion of the word כבר and other forms derived from the same root. The feminine or abstract occ. Gen. xxxv. 16, xlviii. 7, and 2 Kings v. 19, joined with ארץ, rendered in the A. V. a 'little' way. The verb occ. in hiphil, Job xxxv. 16, xxxvi. 31, translated 'multiplied,' 'in abundance;' and in the hiphil form, with the characteristic *jud* inserted—Job viii. 2, xv. 10, etc.; Isa. x. 13, xvii. 12, etc.—in the sense of 'full of years,' 'overflowing,' and the like. A diligent comparison of these meanings shows that 'fulness,' in the sense of 'complete ness,' must be the root-meaning; and hence, when applied to time, the LXX. render ἤδη, 'already.' With this meaning agree also the Arabic and Syriac, see Fuerst, Lexicon, *s. voc.* The meaning then of the word is, the '*complete* present.' With regard to the use of the root מלך in the sense of counsel, it occurs once in Hebrew, viz. Neh. v. 7, and once in biblical Chaldee, Dan. iv. 27 (24). This meaning is common, as remarked in the note, in Aramaic. The fair inference from this is, that the root-meaning of the Hebrew word is 'to counsel,' just as the root-meaning of the word Apostle is 'one sent.' These senses are just what the context requires. Koheleth turns round to see wisdom in comparison with, or contradistinction to, false hopes and false prudence, and asks how the man, that is, humanity, can tell the one from the other. His words are 'what is,' not '*who* is the man,' etc., equivalent to—'in what way can humanity enter upon the results of the counsel,' 'or the king,'—the equivoke being, we believe, intentional, and the contracted relative giving a conditional turn to the sentence—'with respect to that which at present he performs it.' It would have been better if the word with had been printed in the notes with a small letter, as the division hardly amounts to a period, though the connexion is not close. The suffix of the verb refers back through the relative pronoun to counsel, and might be well rendered into English thus—'In respect of which he at present takes that counsel.' The LXX., contrary to their custom, omit ἤδη, because it is perhaps sufficiently included in ἐπελεύ-

σεται, or because τὰ ὅσα ἤδη ἐποίησαν αὐτήν would not have been intelligible. It is evident this all squares with the context. Koheleth, as Solomon, discovered that with all his wisdom he could not practically discern the difference between this true wisdom and that false prudence which led him to accumulate only to be disappointed in his successor.

P. 19, Notes. *At end of Note on v.* 25 *add:* The phrase ומי יחוש חוץ ממני requires further elucidation. The reading ממנו, supported by the LXX., is also confirmed by Hebrew MSS. The literal rendering is—'and who hastens outside him.' This the LXX. translate καὶ τίς πιέται πάρεξ αὐτοῦ, 'who drinks,' etc. There is a reading of A^2, φείσεται, 'spares.' The former is supported by Peshito, Arabic, and Theodotion—the latter by Aquila, Symmachus, and Jerome. If the Greek text alone had to be considered, φείσεται would, as the harder reading, be entitled to the preference. It is readily seen, however, that it arose from a conjectural alteration of the Hebrew text into חוס, for which there is no authority; neither will the meaning to 'spare' make any sense in the context. As the root occurs frequently, we are driven to the conclusion that the rendering of the LXX. was by design. Schleusner's conjecture that πίεται is used in the signification of 'sensibus frui,' is no doubt correct—comp. Hab. i. 8, as also Isa. xxviii. 16. Considered as *ad sensum*, this rendering gives the idea of the Hebrew text correctly.

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